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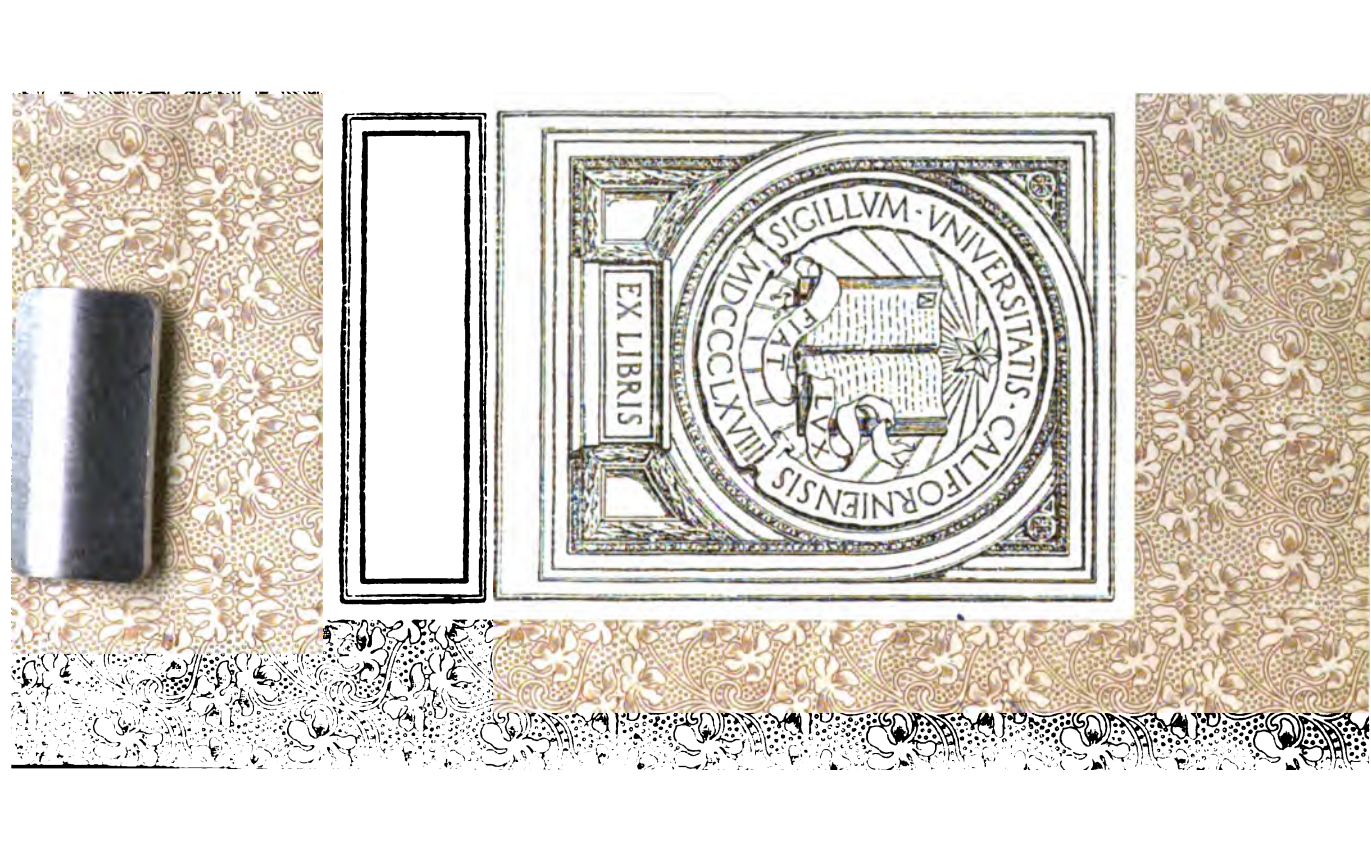
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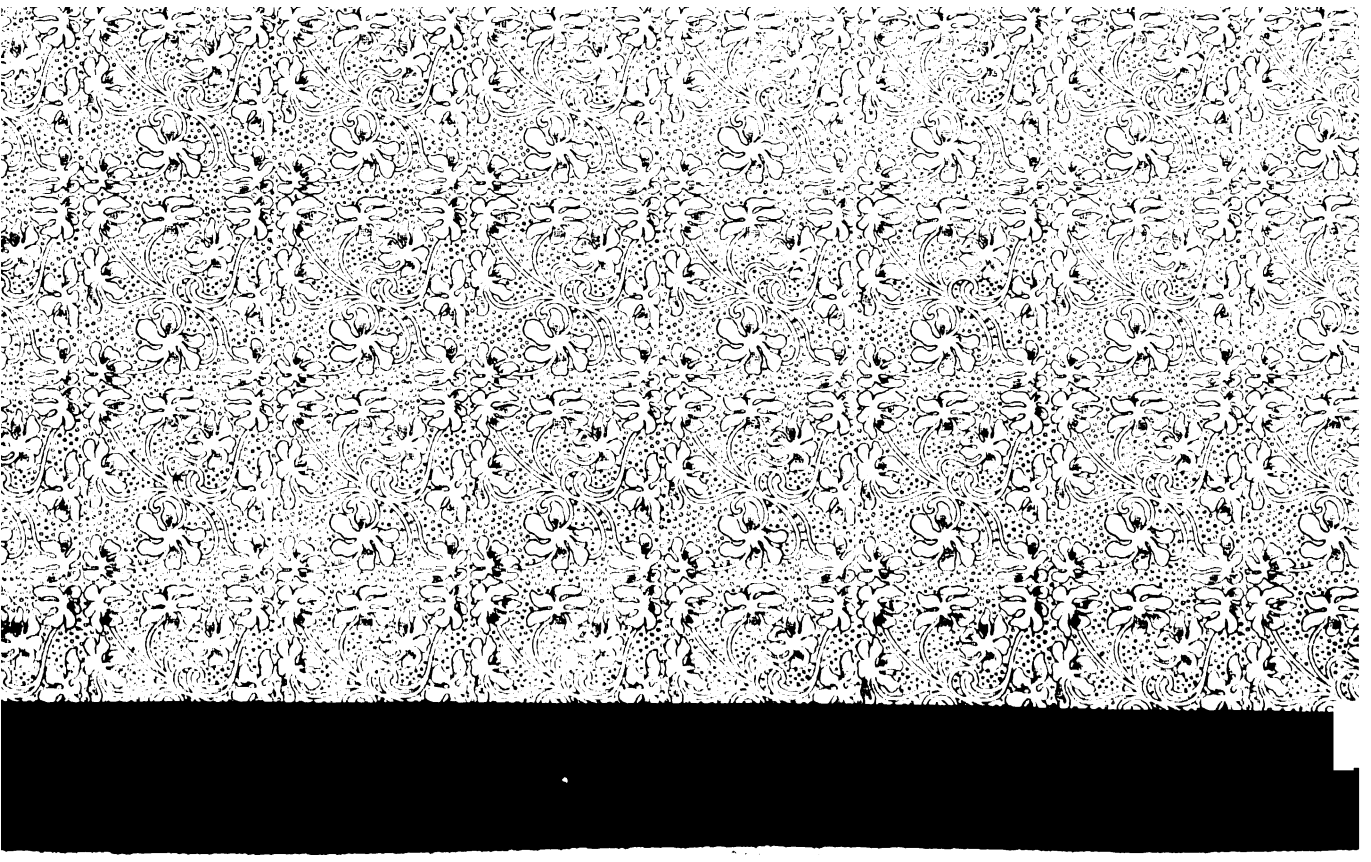

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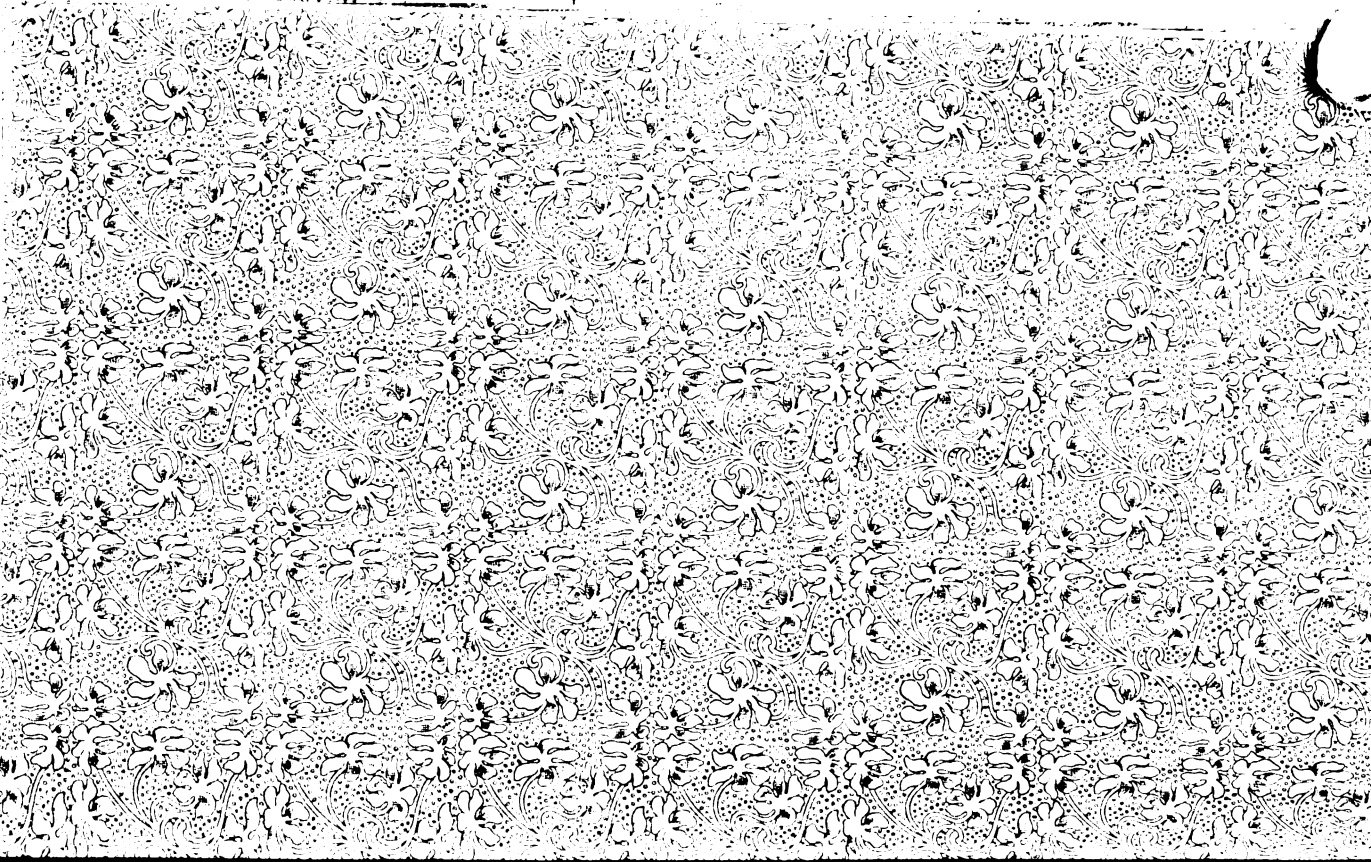

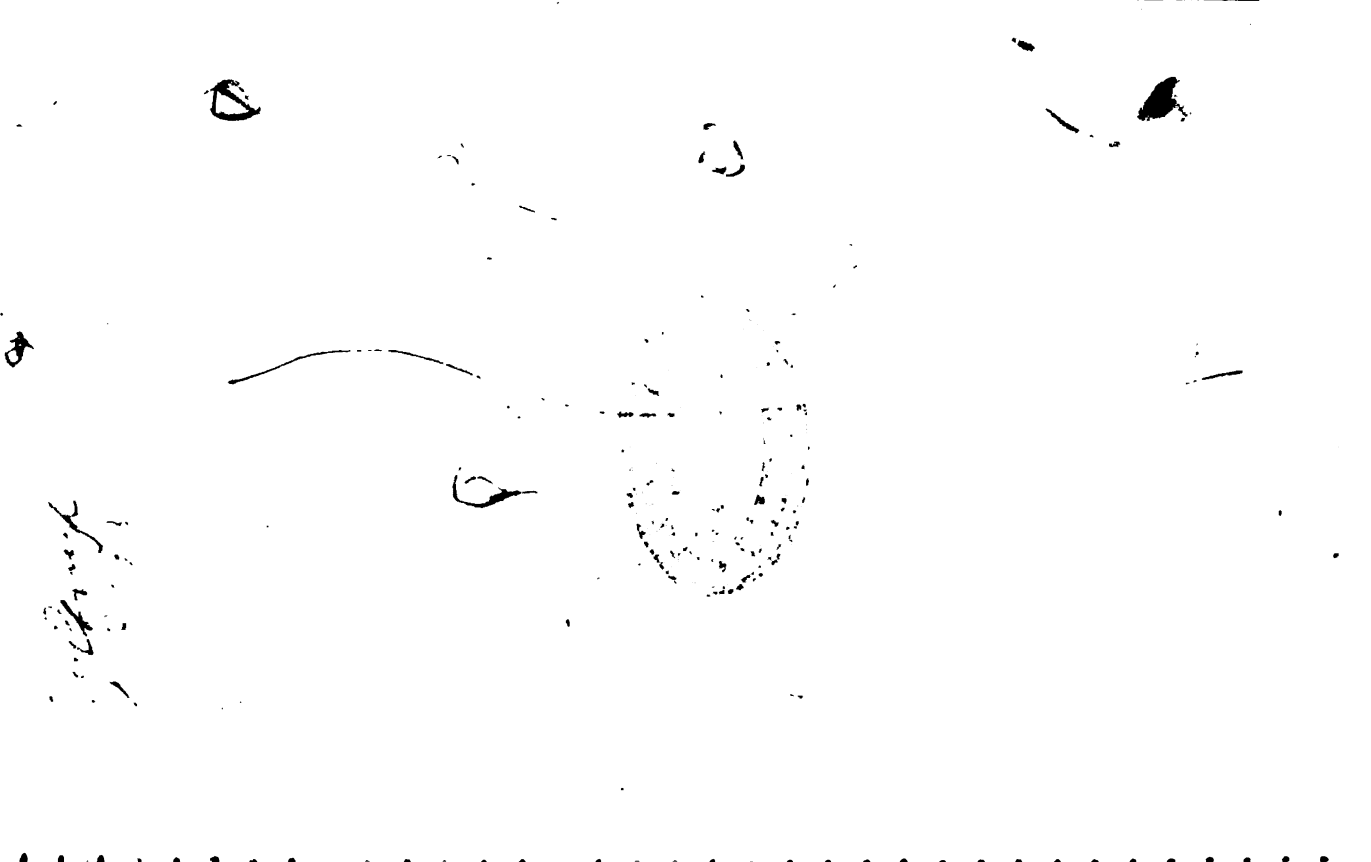

THIRD THOUSAND.

# THE WHITE SLAVES

OF

# ENGLAND.

COMPILED FROM OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

WITH TWELVE SPIRITED ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY JOHN C. COBDEN.

AUBURN:
DERBY AND MILLER.
BUFFALO:
DERBY, ORTON AND MULLIGAN.
CINCINNATI:
HENRY W. DERBY.
1853.

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58162

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# PREFACE.

THE following pages exhibit a system of wrong and outrage equally abhorrent to justice, civilization and humanity. The frightful abuses which are here set forth, are, from their enormity, difficult of belief; yet they are supported by testimony the most impartial, clear and irrefutable. These abuses are time-honored, and have the sanction of a nation which prides itself upon the *freedom of its Constitution;* and which holds up its government to the nations of the earth as a model of *regulated liberty.* Vain, audacious, *false* assumption! Let the refutation be found in the details which this volume furnishes, of the want, misery and starvation — the slavish toil — the menial degradation of nineteen-twentieths of her people. Let her *miners*, her *operatives*, *the tenants of her work-houses*, her *naval service*, and the millions upon millions in the *Emerald Isle* and in farther India attest its fallacy.

These are the legitimate results of the laws and institutions of Great Britain; and they reach and affect, in a greater or less degree, all her dependencies. Her *church and state*, and her *laws of entail and primogeniture*, are the principal sources of the evils under which her people groan; and until these are

changed there is no just ground of hope for an improvement in their condition. The tendency of things is, indeed, to make matters still worse. The poor are every year becoming poorer, and more dependent upon those who feast upon their sufferings; while the wealth and power of the realm are annually concentrating in fewer hands, and becoming more and more instruments of oppression. The picture is already sufficiently revolting. "Nine hundred and ninety-nine children of the same common Father, suffer from destitution, that the thousandth may revel in superfluities. A thousand cottages shrink into meanness and want, to swell the dimensions of a single palace. The tables of a thousand families of the industrious poor waste away into drought and barrenness, that one board may be laden with surfeits."

From these monstrous evils there seems to be little chance of escape, except by flight; and happy is it for the victims of oppression, that an asylum is open to them, in which they can fully enjoy the rights and privileges, from which, for ages, they have been debarred. Let them come. The feudal chains which so long have bound them can here be shaken off. Here they can freely indulge the pure impulses of the mind and the soul, untrammeled by political or religious tyranny. Here they can enjoy the beneficent influences of humane institutions and laws, and find a vast and ample field in which to develop and properly employ all their faculties.

The United States appear before the eyes of the downtrodden whites of Europe as a land of promise. Thousands of ignorant, degraded wretches, who have fled from their homes to

escape exhausting systems of slavery, annually land upon our shores, and in their hearts thank God that he has created such a refuge. This is the answer — the overwhelming answer — to the decriers of our country and its institutions. These emigrants are more keenly alive to the superiority of our institutions than most persons who have been bred under them, and to their care we might confidently intrust our defence.

We design to prove in this work that the oligarchy which owns Great Britain at the present day is the best friend of human slavery, and that its system is most barbarous and destructive. Those feudal institutions which reduced to slavery the strong-minded race of whites, are perpetuated in Great Britain, to the detriment of freedom wherever the British sway extends. Institutions which nearly every other civilized country has abolished, and which are at least a century behind the age, still curse the British islands and their dependencies. This system of slavery, with all its destructive effects, will be found fully illustrated in this volume.

Our plan has been to quote English authorities wherever possible. Out of their own mouths shall they be condemned. We have been much indebted to the publications of distinguished democrats of England, who have keenly felt the evils under which their country groans, and striven, with a hearty will, to remove them. They have the sympathies of civilized mankind with their cause. May their efforts soon be crowned with success, for the British masses and oppressed nations far away in the East will shout loud and long when the aristocracy is brought to the dust!

"* * * * * AS WE HAVE BEEN GREAT IN CRIME, LET US BE EARLY IN REPENTANCE. THERE WILL BE A DAY OF RETRIBUTION, WHEREIN WE SHALL HAVE TO GIVE ACCOUNT OF ALL THE TALENTS, FACULTIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES WHICH HAVE BEEN INTRUSTED TO US. LET IT NOT THEN APPEAR THAT OUR SUPERIOR POWER HAS BEEN EMPLOYED TO OPPRESS OUR FELLOW CREATURES, AND OUR SUPERIOR LIGHT TO DARKEN THE CREATION OF OUR GOD."—*Wilberforce.*

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THE

# WHITE SLAVES OF ENGLAND.

## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL SLAVERY PROCEEDING FROM THE EXISTENCE OF THE BRITISH ARISTOCRACY.

WHAT is slavery? A system under which the time and toil of one person are compulsorily the property of another. The power of life and death, and the privilege of using the lash in the master, are not essential, but casual attendants of slavery, which comprehends all involuntary servitude without adequate recompense or the means of escape. He who can obtain no property in the soil, and is not represented in legislation, is a slave; for he is completely at the mercy of the lord of the soil and the holder of the reins of government. Sometimes slavery is founded upon the inferiority of one race to another; and then it appears in its most agreeable garb, for the system may be necessary to tame and civilize a race of savages. But the subjection of the majority of a nation to an involuntary, hopeless, exhausting, and demoralizing servitude, for the benefit of

an idle and luxurious few of the same nation, is slavery in its most appalling form. Such a system of slavery, we assert, exists in Great Britain.

In the United Kingdom, the land is divided into immense estates, constantly retained in a few hands; and the tendency of the existing laws of entail and primogeniture is to reduce even the number of these proprietors. According to McCulloch, there are 77,007,048 acres of land in the United Kingdom, including the small islands adjacent. Of this quantity, 28,227,435 acres are uncultivated; while, according to Mr. Porter, another English writer, about 11,300,000 acres, now lying waste, are fit for cultivation. The number of proprietors of all this land is about 50,000. Perhaps, this is a rather high estimate for the present period. Now the people of the United Kingdom number at least 28,000,000. What a tremendous majority, then, own not a foot of soil! But this is not the worst. Such is the state of the laws, that the majority never can acquire an interest in the land. Said the London *Times*, in 1844, "*Once a peasant in England, and the man must remain a peasant for ever;*" and, says Mr. Kay, of Trinity College, Cambridge—

"Unless the English peasant will consent to tear himself from his relations, friends, and early associations, and either transplant himself into a town or into a distant colony, he has no chance of improving his condition in the world."

Admit this—admit that the peasant must remain

through life at the mercy of his lord, and of legislation in which his interests are not represented—and tell us if he is a freeman?

To begin with England, to show the progress and effects of the land monopoly:—The Rev. Henry Worsley states that in the year 1770, there were in England 250,000 freehold estates, in the hands of 250,000 different families; and that, in 1815, the whole of the lands of England were concentrated in the hands of only 32,000 proprietors! So that, as the population increases, the number of proprietors diminishes. A distinguished lawyer, who was engaged in the management of estates in Westmoreland and Cumberland counties in 1849, says—

"The greater proprietors in this part of the country are buying up all the land, and including it in their settlements. Whenever one of the small estates is put up for sale, the great proprietors outbid the peasants and purchase it at all costs. The consequence is, that for some time past, the number of the small estates has been rapidly diminishing in all parts of the country. In a short time none of them will remain, but all be merged in the great estates. * * * The consequence is, that the peasant's position, instead of being what it once was—one of hope—is gradually becoming one of despair. Unless a peasant emigrates, there is now no chance for him. It is impossible for him to rise above the peasant class."

The direct results of this system are obvious. Unable to buy land, the tillers of the soil live merely by the sufferance of the proprietors. If one of the great landholders takes the notion that grazing will be more

profitable than farming, he may sweep away the homes of his labourers, turning the poor wretches upon the country as wandering paupers, or driving them into the cities to overstock the workshops and reduce the wages of the poor workman. And what is the condition of the peasants who are allowed to remain and labour upon the vast estates? Let Englishmen speak for Englishmen.

Devon, Somerset, Dorset, and Wiltshire are generally regarded as presenting the agricultural labourer in his most deplorable circumstances, while Lincolnshire exhibits the other extreme. We have good authority for the condition of the peasantry in all these counties. Mr. John Fox, medical officer of the Cerne Union, in Dorsetshire, says—

"Most of the cottages are of the worst description; some mere mud-hovels, and situated in low and damp places, with cesspools or accumulations of filth close to the doors. The mud floors of many are much below the level of the road, and, in wet seasons, are little better than so much clay. In many of the cottages, the beds stood on the ground floor, which was damp three parts of the year; scarcely one had a fireplace in the bedroom; and one had a single small pane of glass stuck in the mud wall as its only window. Persons living in such cottages are generally very poor, very dirty, and usually in rags, living almost wholly on bread and potatoes, scarcely ever tasting any animal food, and, consequently, highly susceptible of disease, and very unable to contend with it."

Very often, according to other equally good authority, there is not more than one room for the whole family,

and the demoralization of that family is the natural consequence. The *Morning Chronicle* of November, 1849, said of the cottages at Southleigh, in Devon—

"One house, which our correspondent visited, was almost a ruin. It had continued in that state for ten years. The floor was of mud, dipping near the fireplace into a deep hollow, which was constantly filled with water. There were five in the family —a young man of twenty-one, a girl of eighteen, and another girl of about thirteen, with the father and mother, all sleeping together up-stairs. And what a sleeping-room! 'In places it seemed falling in. To ventilation it was an utter stranger. The crazy floor shook and creaked under me as I paced it.' Yet the rent was 1*s.* a week—the same sum for which apartments that may be called luxurious in comparison may be had in the model lodging-houses. And here sat a girl weaving that beautiful Honiton lace which our peeresses wear on court-days. Cottage after cottage at Southleigh presented the same characteristics. Clay floors, low ceilings letting in the rain, no ventilation; two rooms, one above and one below; gutters running through the lower room to let off the water; unglazed window-frames, now boarded up, and now uncovered to the elements, the boarding going for firewood; the inmates disabled by rheumatism, ague, and typhus; broad, stagnant, open ditches close to the doors; heaps of abominations piled round the dwellings; such are the main features of Southleigh; and it is in these worse than pig-styes that one of the most beautiful fabrics that luxury demands or art supplies is fashioned. The parish houses are still worse. 'One of these, on the borders of Devonshire and Cornwall, and not far from Launceston, consisted of two houses, containing between them four rooms. In each room lived a family night and day, the space being about twelve feet square. In one were a man and his wife and eight children; the father, mother, and two children lay in one bed, the remaining six were huddled 'head and foot' (three at the top and three at the foot) in the other bed. The eldest girl was between fifteen and sixteen, the

eldest boy between fourteen and fifteen.' Is it not horrible to think of men and women being brought up in this foul and brutish manner in civilized and Christian England! The lowest of savages are not worse cared for than these children of a luxurious and refined country."

Yet other authorities describe cases much worse than this which so stirs the heart of the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. The frightful immorality consequent upon such a mode of living will be illustrated fully in another portion of this work.

In Lincolnshire, the cottages of the peasantry are in a better condition than in any other part of England; but in consequence of the lowness of wages and the comparative enormity of rents, the tillers of the soil are in not much better circumstances than their rural brethren in other counties. Upon an average, a hard-working peasant can earn five shillings a week; two shillings of which go for rent. If he can barely live when employed, what is to become of him when thrown out of employment? Thus the English peasant is driven to the most constant and yet hopeless labour, with whips more terrible than those used by the master of the negro slave.

In Wales, the condition of the peasant, thanks to the general system of lord and serf, is neither milder nor more hopeful than in England. Mr. Symonds, a commissioner who was sent by government to examine the state of education in some of the Welsh counties, says of the peasantry of Brecknockshire, Cardiganshire, and Radnorshire—

"The people of my district are almost universally poor. In some parts of it, wages are probably lower than in any part of Great Britain. The evidence of the witnesses, fully confirmed by other statements, exhibits much poverty, but little amended in other parts of the counties on which I report. *The farmers themselves are very much impoverished, and live no better than English cottagers in prosperous agricultural counties.*

"The cottages in which the people dwell are miserable in the extreme in nearly every part of the country in Cardiganshire, and every part of Brecknockshire and Radnorshire, except the east. I have myself visited many of the dwellings of the poor, and my assistants have done so likewise. *I believe the Welsh cottages to be very little, if at all, superior to the Irish huts in the country districts.*

"Brick chimneys are very unusual in these cottages; those which exist are usually in the shape of large cones, the top being of basket-work. *In very few cottages is there more than one room,* which serves the purposes of living and sleeping. A large dresser and shelves usually form the partition between the two; and where there are separate beds for the family, a curtain or low board is (if it exists) the only division with no regular partition. And this state of things very generally prevails, even where there is some little attention paid to cleanliness; but the cottages and beds are frequently filthy. The people are always very dirty. In all the counties, the cottages are generally destitute of necessary outbuildings, including even those belonging to the farmers; and both in Cardiganshire and Radnorshire, except near the border of England, the pigs and poultry have free run of the joint dwelling and sleeping rooms."

In Scotland, the estates of the nobility are even larger than in England. Small farms are difficult to find. McCulloch states that there are not more than 8000 proprietors of land in the whole of Scotland; and, as in England, this number is decreasing. In some districts, the cottages of the peasantry are as wretched

as any in England or Wales. For some years past, the great landholders, such as the Duke of Buccleuch and the Duchess of Sutherland, have been illustrating the glorious beneficence of British institutions by removing the poor peasantry from the homes of their fathers, for the purpose of turning the vacated districts into deer-parks, sheep-walks, and large farms. Many a Highland family has vented a curse upon the head of the remorseless Duchess of Sutherland. Most slaveholders in other countries feed, shelter, and protect their slaves, in compensation for work; but the Duchess and her barbarous class take work, shelter, food, and protection from their serfs all at one fell swoop, turning them upon the world to beg or starve. Scotland has reason—strong reason—to bewail the existence of the British aristocracy.

Next let us invoke the testimony of Ireland—the beautiful and the wretched—Ireland, whose people have been the object of pity to the nations for centuries—whose miseries have been the burden of song and the theme of eloquence till they have penetrated all hearts save those of the oppressors—whose very life-blood has been trampled out by the aristocracy. Let us hear her testimony in regard to the British slave system.

Ireland is splendidly situated, in a commercial point of view, commanding the direct route between Northern Europe and America, with some of the finest harbours in the world. Its soil is rich and fruitful. Its rivers

are large, numerous, and well adapted for internal commerce. The people are active, physically and intellectually, and, everywhere beyond Ireland, are distinguished for their energy, perseverance, and success. Yet, in consequence of its organized oppression, called government, Ireland is the home of miseries which have scarcely a parallel upon the face of the earth. The great landlords spend most of their time in England or upon the continent, and leave their lands to the management of agents, who have sub-agents for parts of the estates, and these latter often have still inferior agents. Many of the great landlords care nothing for their estates beyond the receipt of the rents, and leave their agents to enrich themselves at the expense of the tenantry. Everywhere in Ireland, a traveller, as he passes along the roads, will see on the roadsides and in the fields, places which look like mounds of earth and sods, with a higher heap of sods upon the top, out of which smoke is curling upward; and with two holes in the sides of the heap next the road, one of which is used as the door, and the other as the window of the hovel. These are the homes of the peasantry! Entering a hovel, you will find it to contain but one room, formed by the four mud walls; and in these places, upon the mud floor, the families of the peasant live. Men, women, boys, and girls live and sleep together, and herd with the wallowing pig. Gaunt, ragged figures crawl out of these hovels and

plant the ground around them with potatoes, which constitute the only food of the inmates throughout the year, or swarm the roads and thoroughfares as wretched beggars. The deplorable condition of these peasants was graphically described by no less a person than Sir Robert Peel, in his great speech on Ireland, in 1849; and the evidence quoted by him was unimpeachable. But not only are the majority of the Irish condemned to exist in such hovels as we have sketched above—their tenure of these disgusting cabins is insecure. If they do not pay the rent for them at the proper time, they are liable to be turned adrift even in the middle of the night. No notice is necessary. The tenants are subject to the tender mercies of a bailiff, without any remedy or appeal, except to the court of Heaven. Kay states that in 1849, more than 50,000 families were evicted and turned as beggars upon the country. An Englishman who travelled through Ireland in the fall of 1849, says—

"In passing through some half dozen counties, Cork, (especially in the western portions of it,) Limerick, Clare, Galway, and Mayo, you see thousands of ruined cottages and dwellings of the labourers, the peasants, and the small holders of Ireland. You see from the roadside twenty houses at once with not a roof upon them. I came to a village not far from Castlebar, where the system of eviction had been carried out only a few days before. Five women came about us as the car stopped, and on making inquiry, they told us their sorrowful story. They were not badly clad; they were cleanly in appearance; they were intelligent; they used no violent language, but in the most moderate terms

told us that on the Monday week previously those five houses had been levelled. They told us how many children there were in their families: I recollect one had eight, another had six; that the husbands of three of them were in this country for the harvest; that they had written to their husbands to tell them of the desolation of their homes. And, I asked them, 'What did the husbands say in reply?' They said 'they had not been able to eat any breakfast!' It is but a simple observation, but it marks the sickness and the sorrow which came over the hearts of those men, who here were toiling for their three or four pounds, denying themselves almost rest at night that they might make a good reaping at the harvest, and go back that they might enjoy it in the home which they had left. All this is but a faint outline of what has taken place in that unhappy country. Thousands of individuals have died within the last two or three years in consequence of the evictions which have taken place."

The great loss of life in the famine of 1847 showed that the peasantry had a miserable dependence upon the chances of a good potato crop for the means of keeping life in their bodies. Crowds of poor wretches, after wandering about for a time like the ghosts of human beings, starved to death by the roadside, victims of the murderous policy of the landed aristocracy. Since that period of horror, the great proprietors, envious of the lurid fame achieved by the Duchess of Sutherland in Scotland, have been evicting their tenants on the most extensive scale, and establishing large farms and pasturages, which they deem more profitable than former arrangements. In despair at home, the wretched Irish are casting their eyes to distant lands for a refuge from slavery and starvation. But hundreds of thou-

sands groan in their hereditary serfdom, without the means of reaching other and happier countries. The dearest ties of family are sundered by the force of want. The necessity of seeking a subsistence drives the father to a distant land, while the child is compelled to remain in Ireland a pauper. The husband can pay his own passage to America, perchance, but the wife must stay in the land of misery. Ask Ireland if a slave can breathe in Great Britain! The long lamentation of ages, uniting with the heart-broken utterances of her present wretched bondsmen, might touch even the British aristocracy in its reply.

So much for the general condition of the peasantry in the United Kingdom. The miserable consequences of the system of lord and serf do not end here. No! There are London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Dublin, and many other cities and towns, with their crowds of slaves either in the factories and workshops, or in the streets as paupers and criminals. There are said to be upward of four millions of paupers in the United Kingdom! Can such an amount of wretchedness be found in any country upon the face of the globe? To what causes are we to attribute this amount of pauperism, save to the monopolies and oppressions of the aristocracy? Think of there being in the United Kingdom over eleven million acres of good land uncultivated, and four millions of paupers! According to Kay, more than two millions of people were kept from

starving in England and Wales, in 1848, by relief doled out to them from public and private sources. So scant are the earnings of those who labour day and night in the cities and towns, that they may become paupers if thrown out of work for a single week. Many from town and country are driven by the fear of starvation to labour in the mines, the horrors of which species of slavery shall be duly illustrated farther on in this work.

Truly did Southey write—

"To talk of English happiness, is like talking of Spartan freedom; the *helots* are overlooked. In no country can such riches be acquired by commerce, but it is the one who grows rich by the labour of the hundred. The hundred human beings like himself, as wonderfully fashioned by nature, gifted with the like capacities, and equally made for immortality, are sacrificed *body and soul*. Horrible as it must needs appear, the assertion is true to the very letter. They are deprived in childhood of all instruction and all enjoyment—of the sports in which childhood instinctively indulges—of fresh air by day and of natural sleep by night. Their health, physical and moral, is alike destroyed; they die of diseases induced by unremitting task-work, by confinement in the impure atmosphere of crowded rooms, by the particles of metallic or vegetable dust which they are continually inhaling; or they live to grow up without decency, without comfort, and without hope—without morals, without religion, and without shame; and bring forth *slaves* like themselves to tread in the same path of misery."

Again, the same distinguished Englishman says, in number twenty-six of Espriella's Letters—

"The English boast of their liberty, but there is *no liberty in England for the poor*. They are no longer sold with the soil, it

is true; but they cannot quit the soil if there be any probability or suspicion that age or infirmity may disable them. If, in such a case, they endeavour to remove to some situation where they hope more easily to maintain themselves, where work is more plentiful or provisions cheaper, the overseers are alarmed, the intruder is apprehended, as if he were a criminal, and sent back to his own parish. Wherever a pauper dies, that parish must be at the cost of his funeral. Instances, therefore, have not been wanting of wretches, in the last stage of disease, having been hurried away in an open cart, upon straw, and dying upon the road. Nay, even women, in the very pains of labour, have been driven out, and have perished by the wayside, because the birth-place of the child would be its parish!"

The sufferings of the rural labourers—the peasantry of Great Britain and Ireland—are to be attributed to the fact that they have no property in the land, and cannot acquire any. The law of primogeniture, on which the existence of the British aristocracy depends, has, as we have already shown, placed the land and those who labour on it—the soil and the serfs—at the disposal of a few landed proprietors. The labourers are not attached to the soil, and bought and sold with it, as in Russia. The English aristocrat is too cunning to adopt such a regulation, because it would involve the necessity of supporting his slaves. They are *called* freemen, in order to enable their masters to detach them from the soil, and drive them forth to starve, when it suits their convenience, without incurring any legal penalty for their cruelty, such as the slaveholders of other countries would suffer. The Russian, the Spanish, the North American slaveholder must support his

slaves in sickness and helpless old age, or suffer the penalties of the law for his neglect. The British slaveholder alone may drive his slaves forth to starve in the highway by hundreds and thousands; and no law of Great Britain affords the means of punishing him for his murderous cruelty. His Irish slaves may be saved from starvation by American bounty, but he cannot be punished until he shall meet his Judge at the day of final account.

## CHAPTER II.

### SLAVERY IN THE BRITISH MINES.

In proceeding to speak more particularly of the various forms of British slavery, we will begin with labour in the mines—the horrors of which became known to the world through reports made to Parliament in the summer of 1840. Pressed by the fear of general execration, Parliament appointed a commission of inquiry, which, after a thorough examination of all the mines in the United Kingdom, made a voluminous report. So shocking were the accounts of labour in the mines given by this commission, that the delicate nerves of several perfumed lords were grievously pained, and they denounced the commissioners as being guilty of exaggeration. Nevertheless, the evidence adduced by the officers was unimpeachable, and their statements were generally received as plain truth.

The mining industry of the kingdom is divided into two distinct branches—that of the coal and iron mines, and that of the mines of tin, copper, lead, and zinc. The "coal measures," as the geological formations comprising the strata of coal are designated, are variously dispersed in the middle, northern, and western

COAL GETTER AT WORK.

portions of South Britain, and in a broad belt of country which traverses the centre of Scotland, from the shores of Ayrshire to those of the Frith of Forth. There are, also, some coal-tracts in Ireland, but they are of comparatively small importance. In all these districts, the coal is found in beds, interstratified for the most part with various qualities of gritstone and shale, in which, in some of the districts, occur layers of ironstone, generally thin, but sometimes forming large masses, as in the Forest of Dean. When the surface of the coal country is mountainous and intersected by deep ravines, as in South Wales, the mineral deposites are approached by holes driven into the sides of the hills; but the common access to them is by vertical shafts, or well-holes, from the bottoms of which horizontal roadways are extended in long and confined passages through the coal strata, to bring all that is hewn to the "pit's eye," or bottom of the shaft, for winding up. It is requisite to have more than one shaft in the same workings; but where the coal lies so deep that the sinking of a distinct shaft requires an enormous outlay of capital, only one large shaft is sunk; and this is divided by wooden partitions, or brattices, into several distinct channels. There must always be one shaft or channel, called the "downcast pit," for the air to descend; and another, called the "upcast pit," for the return draught to ascend. The apparatus for lowering and drawing up is generally in

the upcast shaft. This is either a steam-engine, a horse-gin, or a hand-crank. The thickness of the seams that are wrought varies from the eighteen-inch seams of the Lancashire and Yorkshire hills, to the ten-yard coal of South Staffordshire. But two, three, and four feet are the more common thicknesses of the beds that are wrought. When there is a good roof, or hard rock immediately over the coal, with a tolerably solid floor beneath it, thin coal-seams can be worked with advantage, because the outlay of capital for propping is then very limited; but the very hardness of the contiguous strata would require an outlay almost as great to make the roadways of a proper height for human beings of any age to work in.

By the evidence collected under the commission, it is proved that there are coal-mines at present at work in which some passages are so small, that even the youngest children cannot move along them without crawling on their hands and feet, in which constrained position they drag the loaded carriages after them; and yet, as it is impossible by any outlay compatible with a profitable return, to render such coal-mines fit for human beings to work in, they never will be placed in such a condition, and, consequently, they never can be worked without this child slavery! When the roads are six feet high and upward, there is not only ample space for carrying on the general operations of the mine, but the coals can be drawn direct from the workings to the

foot of the shaft by the largest horses; and when the main roads are four feet and a half high, the coals may be conveyed to the foot of the shaft by ponies or asses. But when the main ways are under four feet, the coals can only be conveyed by children. Yet, in many mines, the main gates are only from twenty-four to thirty inches high. In this case, even the youngest children must work in a bent position of the body. When the inclination of the strata causes all the workings out of the main ways to be on inclined plains, the young labourers are not only almost worked to death, but exposed to severe accidents in descending the plains with their loads, out of one level into another. In many of the mines, there is such a want of drainage and ventilation, that fatal diseases are contracted by the miners.

According to the report of the Parliamentary commission, about one-third of the persons employed in the coal-mines were under eighteen years of age, and much more than one-third of this number were under thirteen years of age. When the proprietor employs the whole of the hands, not only will his general overseer be a respectable person, but his underlookers will be taken from the more honest, intelligent, and industrious of the labouring colliers. Elsewhere, the rulers in pits are such as the rudest class is likely to produce. The great body of the children and young persons are, however, of the families of the adult work-people employed in the pits, or belong to the poor population of

the neighbourhood. But, in some districts, there are numerous defenceless creatures who pass the whole of their youth in the most abject slavery, into which they are thrown chiefly by parish authorities, under the name of apprenticeship. Said the Parliamentary commissioners in their report—

"There is one mode of engaging the labour of children and young persons in coal-mines, peculiar to a few districts, which deserves particular notice, viz. that by apprenticeship. The district in which the practice of employing apprentices is most in use, is South Staffordshire; it was formerly common in Shropshire, but is now discontinued; it is still common in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the West of Scotland; in all the other districts, it appears to be unknown. In Staffordshire, the sub-commissioner states that the number of children and young persons working in the mines as apprentices is exceedingly numerous; that these apprentices are paupers or orphans, and are wholly in the power of the butties;* that such is the demand for this class of children by the butties, that there are scarcely any boys in the union workhouses of Walsall, Wolverhampton, Dudley, and Stourbridge; that these boys are sent on trial to the butties between the ages of eight and nine, and at nine are bound as apprentices for twelve years, that is, to the age of twenty-one years complete; that, notwithstanding this long apprenticeship, there is nothing whatever in the coal-mines to learn beyond a little dexterity, readily acquired by short practice; and that even in the mines of Cornwall, where much skill and judgment is required, there are no apprentices, while, in the coal-mines of South Staffordshire, the orphan whom necessity has driven into a workhouse, is made to labour in the mines until the age of twenty-one, solely for the benefit of another."

Thomas Moorhouse, a collier boy, who was brought

* The butties are the men who superintend the conveyance of the coal from the digger to the pit-shaft.

to the notice of the Parliamentary commissioners, said—

"I don't know how old I am; father is dead; I am a chance child; mother is dead also; I don't know how long she has been dead; 'tis better na three years; I began to hurry* when I was nine years old for William Greenwood; I was apprenticed to him till I should be twenty-one; my mother apprenticed me; I lived with Greenwood; I don't know how long it was, but it was a goodish while; he was bound to find me in victuals and drink and clothes; I never had enough; he gave me some old clothes to wear, which he bought at the rag-shop; the overseers gave him a sovereign to buy clothes with, but he never laid it out; the overseers bound me out with mother's consent from the township of Southowram; I ran away from him because he lost my indentures, for he served me very bad; he stuck a pick into me twice."

Here the boy was made to strip, and the commissioner, Mr. Symonds, found a large cicatrix likely to have been occasioned by such an instrument, which must have passed through the glutei muscles, and have stopped only short of the hip-joint. There were twenty other wounds, occasioned by hurrying in low workings, upon and around the spinous processes of the vertebræ, from the sacrum upward. The boy continued—

"He used to hit me with the belt, and mawl or sledge, and fling coals at me. He served me so bad that I left him, and went about to see if I could get a job. I used to sleep in the cabins upon the pit's bank, and in the old pits that had done working. I laid upon the shale all night. I used to get what I could to eat. I ate for a long time the candles that I found in the pits that the colliers left over night. I had nothing else to eat. I looked about for work, and begged of the people a bit. I got to

* To *hurry* is to draw or push the coal-cars.

Bradford after a while, and had a job there for a month while a collier's lad was poorly. When he came back, I was obliged to leave."

Another case was related by Mr. Kennedy, one of the commissioners. A boy, named Edward Kershaw, had been apprenticed by the overseers of Castleton to a collier of the name of Robert Brierly, residing at Balsgate, who worked in a pit in the vicinity of Rooley Moor. The boy was examined, and from twenty-four to twenty-six wounds were found upon his body. His posteriors and loins were beaten to a jelly; his head, which was almost cleared of hair on the scalp, had the marks of many old wounds upon it which had healed up. One of the bones in one arm was broken below the elbow, and, from appearances, seemed to have been so for some time. The boy, on being brought before the magistrates, was unable either to sit or stand, and was placed on the floor of the office, laid on his side on a small cradle-bed. It appears from the evidence, that the boy's arm had been broken by a blow with an iron rail, and the fracture had never been set, and that he had been kept at work for several weeks with his arm in the condition above described. It further appeared in evidence, and was admitted by Brierly, that he had been in the habit of beating the boy with a flat piece of wood, in which a nail was driven and projected about half an inch. The blows had been inflicted with such violence that they penetrated the skin, and caused the

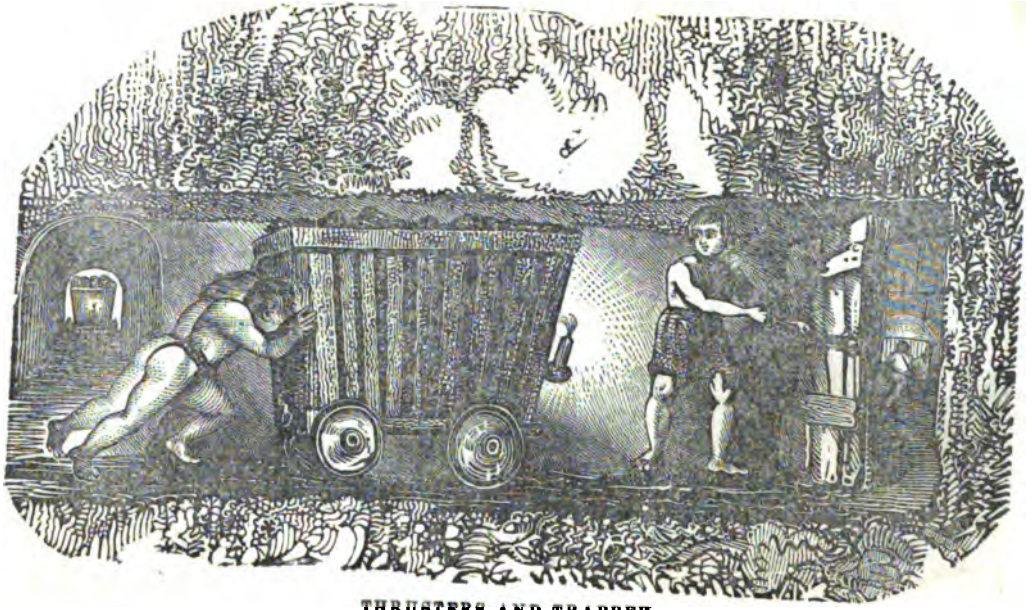
wounds above mentioned. The body of the boy presented all the marks of emaciation. This brutal master had kept the boy at work as a wagoner until he was no longer of any use, and then sent him home in a cart to his mother, who was a poor widow, residing in Church lane, Rochdale. And yet it is said that a slave cannot breathe the air of England!

The want of instruction, and the seclusion from the rest of the world, which is common to the colliers, give them a sad pre-eminence over every other class of labourers, in ignorance and callousness; and when they are made masters, what can be expected? In all cases of apprenticeship, the children are bound till they attain the age of twenty-one years. If the master dies before the apprentice attains the age of twenty-one years, the apprentice is equally bound as the servant of his deceased master's heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns. In fact, the apprentice is part of the deceased master's goods and chattels!

But, to speak more particularly of the labour of the children:—The employment of the adult collier is almost exclusively in the "getting" of the coal from its natural resting-place, of which there are various methods, according to the nature of the seams and the habits of the several districts. That of the children and young persons consists principally either in tending the air-doors where the coal-carriages must pass through openings, the immediately subsequent stoppage of which

is necessary to preserve the ventilation in its proper channels, or in the conveyance of the coal from the bays or recesses in which it is hewn, along the subterranean roadways, to the bottom of the pit-shaft; a distance varying from absolute contiguity even to miles, in the great coal-fields of the North of England, where the depth requires that the same expensive shaft shall serve for the excavation of a large tract of coal. The earliest employment of children in the pits is generally to open and shut the doors, upon the proper custody of which the ventilation and safety of the whole mine depends. These little workmen are called "trappers." Of the manner in which they pass their earlier days, Dr. Mitchell, a distinguished Englishman, has given a very interesting sketch, which deserves to be quoted here entire:—

"The little trapper, of eight years of age, lies quiet in bed. It is now between two and three in the morning, and his mother shakes him and desires him to rise, and tells him that his father has an hour ago gone off to the pit. He turns on his side, rubs his eyes, and gets up, and comes to the blazing fire and puts on his clothes. His coffee, such as it is, stands by the side of the fire, and bread is laid down for him. The fortnight is now well advanced, the money all spent, and butter, bacon, and other luxurious accompaniments of bread, are not to be had at breakfast till next pay-day supply the means. He then fills his tin bottle with coffee and takes a lump of bread, sets out for the pit, into which he goes down in the cage, and walking along the horseway for upward of a mile, he reaches the barrow-way, over which the young men and boys push the trams with the tubs on rails to the flats, where the barrow-way and horse-way meet, and



THRUSTERS AND TRAPPER.

where the tubs are transferred to rolleys or carriages drawn by horses.

"He knows his place of work. It is inside one of the doors called trap-doors, which is in the barrow-way, for the purpose of forcing the stream of air which passes in its long, many-miled course from the down-shaft to the up-shaft of the pit; but which door must be opened whenever men or boys, with or without carriages, may wish to pass through. He seats himself in a little hole, about the size of a common fireplace, and with the string in his hand; and all his work is to pull that string when he has to open the door, and when man or boy has passed through, then to allow the door to shut of itself. Here it is his duty to sit, and be attentive, and pull his string promptly as any one approaches. He may not stir above a dozen steps with safety from his charge, lest he should be found neglecting his duty, and suffer for the same.

"He sits solitary by himself, and has no one to talk to him; for in the pit the whole of the people, men and boys, are as busy as if they were in a sea-fight. He, however, sees now and then the putters urging forward their trams through his gate, and derives some consolation from the glimmer of the little candle of about 40 to the pound, which is fixed on their trams. For he himself has no light. His hours, except at such times, are passed in total darkness. For the first week of his service in the pit his father had allowed him candles to light one after another, but the expense of three halfpence a day was so extravagant expenditure out of tenpence, the boy's daily wages, that his father, of course, withdrew the allowance the second week, all except one or two candles in the morning, and the week after the allowance was altogether taken away; and now, except a neighbour kinder than his father now and then drop him a candle as he passes, the boy has no light of his own.

"Thus hour after hour passes away; but what are hours to him, seated in darkness, in the bowels of the earth? He knows nothing of the ascending or descending sun. Hunger, however, though silent and unseen, acts upon him, and he betakes to his bottle of coffee and slice of bread; and, if desirous, he may have

the luxury of softening it in a portion of water in the pit, which is brought down for man and beast.

"In this state of sepulchral existence, an insidious enemy gains upon him. His eyes are shut, and his ears fail to announce the approach of a tram. A deputy overman comes along, and a smart cut of his yardwand at once punishes the culprit and recalls him to his duty; and happy was it for him that he fell into the hands of the deputy overman, rather than one of the putters; for his fist would have inflicted a severer pain. The deputy overman moreover consoles him by telling him that it was for his good that he punished him; and reminds him of boys, well known to both, who, when asleep, had fallen down, and some had been severely wounded, and others killed. The little trapper believes that he is to blame, and makes no complaint, for he dreads being discharged; and he knows that his discharge would be attended with the loss of wages, and bring upon him the indignation of his father, more terrible to endure than the momentary vengeance of the deputy and the putters all taken together.

"Such is the day-work of the little trapper in the barrow-way.

"At last, the joyful sound of 'Loose, loose,' reaches his ears. The news of its being four o'clock, and of the order, 'Loose, loose,' having been shouted down the shaft, is by systematic arrangement sent for many miles in all directions round the farthest extremities of the pit. The trapper waits until the last putter passes with his tram, and then he follows and pursues his journey to the foot of the shaft, and takes an opportunity of getting into the cage and going up when he can. By five o'clock he may probably get home. Here he finds a warm dinner, baked potatoes, and broiled bacon lying above them. He eats heartily at the warm fire, and sits a little after. He dare not go out to play with other boys, for the more he plays the more he is sure to sleep the next day in the pit. He, therefore, remains at home, until, feeling drowsy, he then repeats the prayer taught by our blessed Lord, takes off his clothes, is thoroughly washed in hot water by his mother, and is laid in his bed."

The evidence of the Parliamentary commissioners

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proves that Dr. Mitchell has given the life of the young trapper a somewhat softened colouring. Mr. Scriven states that the children employed in this way become almost idiotic from the long, dark, solitary confinement. Many of them never see the light of day during the winter season, except on Sundays.

The loaded corves drawn by the hurriers weigh from two to five hundred-weight. These carriages are mounted upon four cast-iron wheels of five inches in diameter, there being, in general, no rails from the headings to the main gates. The children have to drag these carriages through passages in some cases not more than from sixteen to twenty inches in height. Of course, to accomplish this, the young children must crawl on their hands and feet. To render their labour the more easy, the sub-commissioner states that they buckle round their naked person a broad leather strap, to which is attached in front a ring and about four feet of chain, terminating in a hook. As soon as they enter the main gates, they detach the harness from the corve, change their position by getting behind it, and become "thrusters." The carriage is then placed upon the rail, a candle is stuck fast by a piece of wet clay, and away they run with amazing swiftness to the shaft, pushing the loads with their heads and hands. The younger children thrust in pairs.

"After trapping," says the report of the commissioners, "the next labour in the ascending scale to which the children are put, is

'thrutching,' or thrusting, which consists in being helper to a 'drawer,' or 'wagoner,' who is master, or 'butty,' over the 'thrutcher.' In some pits, the thrutcher has his head protected by a thick cap, and he will keep on his trousers and clogs; but in others, he works nearly naked. The size of the loads which he has to thrutch varies with the thickness of the seam; and with the size, varies his butty's method of proceeding, which is either as a drawer or a wagoner. The drawers are those who use the belt and chain. Their labour consists in loading, with the coals hewn down by the 'getter,' an oblong tub without wheels, and dragging this tub on its sledge bottom by means of a girdle of rough leather passing round the body, and a chain of iron attached to that girdle in front, and hooked to the sledge. The drawer has, with the aid of his thrutcher, to sledge the tub in this manner from the place of getting to the mainway, generally down, though sometimes up, a brow or incline of the same steepness as the inclination of the strata; in descending which he goes to the front of his tub, where his light is fixed, and, turning his face to it, regulates its motion down the hill, as, proceeding back foremost, he pulls it along by his belt. When he gets to the mainway, which will be at various distances not exceeding forty or fifty yards from his loading-place, he has to leave this tub upon a low truck running on small iron wheels, and then to go and fetch a second, which will complete its load, and with these two to join with his thrutcher in pushing it along the iron railway to the pit bottom to have the tubs successively hooked on to the drawing-rope. Returning with his tubs empty, he leaves the mainway, first with one, and then with the other tub, to get them loaded, dragging them up the 'brow' by his belt and chain, the latter of which he now passes between his legs, so as to pull, face foremost, on all fours. In the thin seams, this labour has to be performed in bays, leading from the place of getting to the mainways, of scarcely more than twenty inches in height, and in mainways of only two feet six inches, and three feet high, for the seam itself will only be eighteen inches thick.

"Wagoning is a form of drawing which comes into use with the more extensive employment of railways in the thicker seams.

The tubs here used are large, and all mounted on wheels. From the place of getting, the loads are pushed by the wagoners with hands and heads to the bottom of the pit along the levels; and where they have to descend from one level into another, this is generally done by a cut at right angles directly with the dip, down the 'brow' which it makes. Here there is a winch or pinion for jigging the wagons down the incline, with a jigger at the top and a hooker-on at the bottom of the plane, where it is such as to require these. The jiggers and the hookers-on are children of twelve or thirteen. Sometimes the descent from one line of level into another is by a diagonal cutting at a small angle from the levels, called a slant, down which the wagoners can, and do, in some instances, take their wagons without jigging, by their own manual labour; and a very rough process it is, owing to the impetus which so great a weight acquires, notwithstanding the scotching of the wheels."

Mr. Kennedy thus describes the position of the children, in the combined drawing and thrutching:—

"The child in front is harnessed by his belt or chain to the wagon; the two boys behind are assisting in pushing it forward. Their heads, it will be observed, are brought down to a level with the wagon, and the body almost in the horizontal position. This is done partly to avoid striking the roof, and partly to gain the advantage of the muscular action, which is greatest in that position. It will be observed, the boy in front goes on his hands and feet: in that manner, the whole weight of his body is, in fact, supported by the chain attached to the wagon and his feet, and, consequently, his power of drawing is greater than it would be if he crawled on his knees. These boys, by constantly pushing against the wagons, occasionally rub off the hair from the crowns of their heads so much as to make them almost bald."

In Derbyshire, some of the pits are altogether worked by boys. The seams are so thin, that several have only a two-feet headway to all the workings. The boy

who gets the coal, lies on his side while at work. The coal is then loaded in a barrow, or tub, and drawn along the bank to the pit mouth by boys from eight to twelve years of age, on all fours, with a dog-belt and chain, the passages being very often an inch or two thick in black mud, and neither ironed nor wooded. In Mr. Barnes's pit, these boys have to drag the barrows with one hundred-weight of coal or slack, sixty times a day, sixty yards, and the empty barrows back, without once straightening their backs, unless they choose to stand under the shaft and run the risk of having their heads broken by coal falling.

In some of the mines, the space of the workings is so small that the adult colliers are compelled to carry on their operations in a stooping posture; and, in others, they are obliged to work lying their whole length along the uneven floor, and supporting their heads upon a board or short crutch. In these low, dark, heated, and dismal chambers, they work perfectly naked. In many of the thin-seam mines, the labour of "getting" coal, so severe for adults, was found by the commissioners to be put upon children from nine to twelve years of age.

If the employment of boys in such a way be, as a miner said to the commissioners, "barbarity, barbarity," what are we to think of the slavery of female children in the same abyss of darkness? How shall we express our feelings upon learning that females, in the years

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of opening womanhood, are engaged in the same occupations as their male companions, in circumstances repugnant to the crudest sense of decency? Yet we have unimpeachable evidence that, at the time of the investigations of the commissioners, females were thus employed; and there is reason to believe that this is still the case.

The commissioners found females employed like the males in the labours of the mines in districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire, in the East of Scotland, and in Wales. In great numbers of the pits visited, the men were working in a state of entire nakedness, and were assisted by females of all ages, from girls of six years old to women of twenty-one — these females being themselves quite naked down to the waist. Mr. Thomas Pearce says that in the West Riding of Yorkshire—

"The girls hurry with a belt and chain, as well as thrust. There are as many girls as boys employed about here. One of the most disgusting sights I have ever seen, was that of young females, dressed like boys in trousers, crawling on all fours, with belts around their waists and chains passing between their legs, at day-pits at Thurshelf Bank, and in many small pits near Holmfirth and New Mills. It exists also in several other places."

In the neighbourhood of Halifax, it is stated that there is no distinction whatever between the boys and girls in their coming up the shaft and going down; in their mode of hurrying or thrusting; in the weight of corves; in the distance they are hurried; in wages or

dress; that the girls associate and labour with men who are in a state of nakedness, and that they have themselves no other garment than a ragged shift, or, in the absence of that, a pair of broken trousers, to cover their persons.

Here are specimens of the evidence taken by the commissioners:—

"Susan Pitchforth, aged eleven, Elland: 'I have worked in this pit going two years. I have one sister going of fourteen, and she works with me in the pit. I am a thruster.'

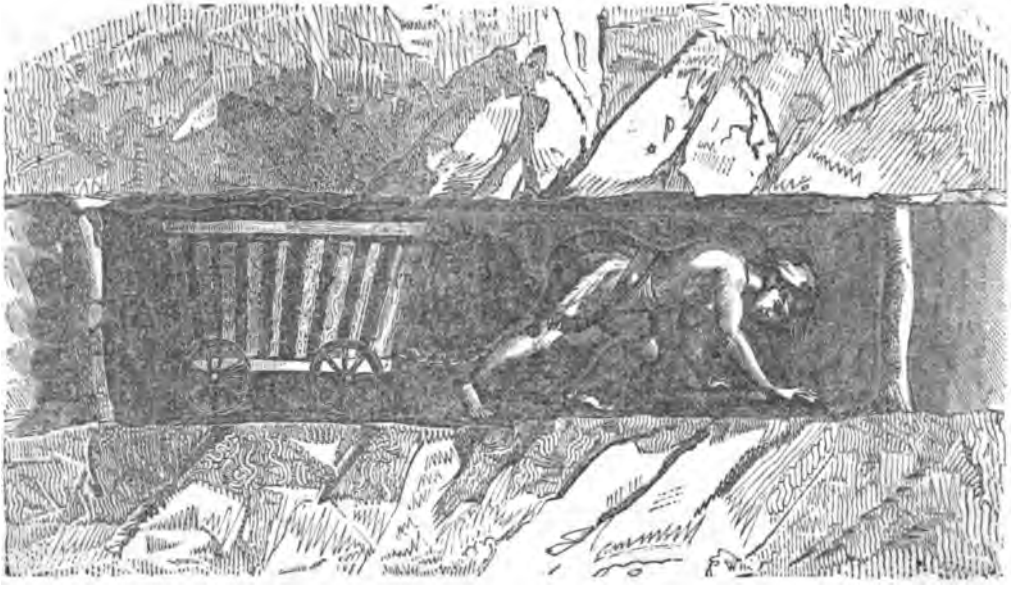
"'This child,' said the sub-commissioner, 'stood shivering before me from cold. The rags that hung about her waist were once called a shift, which was as black as the coal she thrust, and saturated with water—the drippings of the roof and shaft. During my examination of her, the banksman, whom I had left in the pit, came to the public-house and wanted to take her away, because, as he expressed himself, it was not decent that she should be exposed to us.'

"Patience Kershaw, aged seventeen: 'I hurry in the clothes I have now got on, (trousers and ragged jacket;) the bald place upon my head is made by thrusting the corves; the getters I work for are naked except their caps; they pull off their clothes; all the men are naked.'

"Mary Barrett, aged fourteen: 'I work always without stockings, or shoes, or trousers; I wear nothing but my shift; I have to go up to the headings with the men; they are all naked there; I am got well used to that, and don't care much about it; I was afraid at first, and did not like it.'"

In the Lancashire coal-fields lying to the north and west of Manchester, females are regularly employed in underground labour; and the brutal policy of the men, and the abasement of the women, is well described by some of the witnesses examined by Mr. Kennedy.

"Peter Gaskill, collier, at Mr. Lancaster's, near Worsley:



GIRL WITH COAL CART IN THIN SEAM.

'Prefers women to boys as drawers; they are better to manage, and keep the time better; they will fight and shriek and do every thing but let anybody pass them; and they never get to be coal-getters—that is another good thing.'

"Betty Harris, aged thirty-seven, drawer in a coal-pit, Little Bolton: 'I have a belt round my waist and a chain passing between my legs, and I go on my hands and feet. The road is very steep, and we have to hold by a rope, and when there is no rope, by any thing we can catch hold of. There are six women and about six boys and girls in the pit I work in; it is very hard work for a woman. The pit is very wet where I work, and the water comes over our clog-tops always, and I have seen it up to my thighs; it rains in at the roof terribly; my clothes are wet through almost all day long. I never was ill in my life but when I was lying-in. My cousin looks after my children in the daytime. I am very tired when I get home at night; I fall asleep sometimes before I get washed. I am not so strong as I was, and cannot stand my work so well as I used to do. I have drawn till I have had the skin off me. The belt and chain is worse when we are in the family-way. My feller (husband) has beaten me many a time for not being ready. I were not used to it at first, and he had little patience; I have known many a man beat his drawer.'

"Mary Glover, aged thirty-eight, at Messrs. Foster's, Ringley Bridge: 'I went into a coal-pit when I was seven years old, and began by being a drawer. I never worked much in the pit when I was in the family-way, but since I have gave up having children, I have begun again a bit. I wear a shift and a pair of trousers when at work. I always will have a good pair of trousers. I have had many a twopence given me by the boatmen on the canal to show my breeches. I never saw women work naked, but I have seen men work without breeches in the neighbourhood of Bolton. I remember seeing a man who worked stark naked.'"

In the East of Scotland, the business of the females is to remove the coals from the hewer who has picked them from the wall-face, and placing them either on

their backs, which they invariably do when working in edge-seams, or in *little carts* when on levels, to carry them to the main road, where they are conveyed to the pit bottom, where, being emptied into the ascending basket of the shaft, they are wound by machinery to the pit's mouth, where they lie heaped for further distribution. Mr. Franks, an Englishman, says of this barbarous toil—

"Now when the nature of this horrible labour is taken into consideration; its extreme severity; its regular duration of from twelve to fourteen hours daily; the damp, heated, and unwholesome atmosphere of a coal-mine, and the tender age and sex of the workers, a picture is presented of deadly physical oppression and systematic slavery, of which I conscientiously believe no one unacquainted with such facts would credit the existence in the British dominions."

The loads of coal carried on the backs of females vary in weight from three-quarters of a hundred-weight to three hundred-weight. In working edge-seams, or highly inclined beds, the load must be borne to the surface, or to the pit-bottom, up winding stairs, or a succession of steep ladders. The disgrace of this peculiar form of oppression is said to be confined to Scotland, "where, until nearly the close of the last century, the colliers remained in a state of legal bondage, and formed a degraded caste, apart from all humanizing influences and sympathy." From all accounts, they are not much improved in condition at the present time.

A sub-commissioner thus describes a female child's labour in a Scottish mine, and gives some of the evidence he obtained:—

"She has first to descend a nine-ladder pit to the first rest, even to which a shaft is sunk, to draw up the baskets or tubs of coals filled by the bearers; she then takes her creel (a basket formed to the back, not unlike a cockle-shell, flattened toward the back of the neck, so as to allow lumps of coal to rest on the back of the neck and shoulders,) and pursues her journey to the wall-face, or, as it is called here, the room of work. She then lays down her basket, into which the coal is rolled, and it is frequently more than one man can do to lift the burden on her back. The tugs or straps are placed over the forehead, and the body bent in a semicircular form, in order to stiffen the arch. Large lumps of coal are then placed on the neck, and she then commences her journey with her burden to the bottom, first hanging her lamp to the cloth crossing her head. In this girl's case, she has first to travel about fourteen fathoms (eighty-four feet) from wall-face to the first ladder, which is eighteen feet high; leaving the first ladder, she proceeds along the main road, probably three feet six inches to four feet six inches high, to the second ladder, eighteen feet high; so on to the third and fourth ladders, till she reaches the pit-bottom, where she casts her load, varying from one hundred-weight to one hundred-weight and a half, in the tub. This one journey is designated a rake; the height ascended, and the distance along the roads added together, exceed the height of St. Paul's Cathedral; and it not unfrequently happens that the tugs break, and the load falls upon those females who are following. However incredible it may be, yet I have taken the evidence of fathers who have ruptured themselves from straining to lift coal on their children's backs.

"Janet Cumming, eleven years old, bears coals: 'I gang with the women at five, and come up with the women at five at night; work *all night* on Fridays, and come away at twelve in the day. I carry the large bits of coal from the wall-face to the pit-bottom, and the small pieces called chows in a creel. The weight is

usually a hundred-weight; does not know how many pounds there are in a hundred-weight, but it is some weight to carry; it takes three journeys to fill a tub of four hundred-weight. The distance varies, as the work is not always on the same wall; sometimes one hundred and fifty fathoms, whiles two hundred and fifty fathoms. The roof is very low; I have to bend my back and legs, and the water comes frequently up to the calves of my legs. Has no liking for the work; father makes me like it. Never got hurt, but often obliged to scramble out of the pit when bad air was in.'

"William Hunter, mining oversman, Arniston Colliery: 'I have been twenty years in the works of Robert Dundas, Esq., and had much experience in the manner of drawing coal, as well as the habits and practices of the collier people. Until the last eight months, women and lasses were wrought below in these works, when Mr. Alexander Maxton, our manager, issued an order to exclude them from going below, having some months prior given intimation of the same. Women always did the lifting or heavy part of the work, and neither they nor the children were treated like human beings, nor are they where they are employed. Females submit to work in places where no man or even lad could be got to labour in; they work in bad roads, up to their knees in water, in a posture nearly double; they are below till the last hour of pregnancy; they have swelled haunches and ankles, and are prematurely brought to the grave, or, what is worse, lingering existence. Many of the daughters of the miners are now at respectable service. I have two who are in families at Leith, and who are much delighted with the change.'

"Robert Bald, Esq., the eminent coal-viewer, states that, 'In surveying the workings of an extensive colliery under ground, a married woman came forward, groaning under an excessive weight of coals, trembling in every nerve, and almost unable to keep her knees from sinking under her. On coming up, she said, in a plaintive and melancholy voice, "Oh, sir, this is sore, sore, sore work. I wish to God that the first woman who tried to bear coals had broke her back, and none would have tried it again."

The boxes or carriages employed in putting are of two kinds—the hutchie and the slype; the hutchie being an oblong, square-sided box with four wheels, which usually runs on a rail; and the slype a wood-framed box, curved and shod with iron at the bottom, holding from two and a quarter to five hundred-weight of coal, adapted to the seams through which it is dragged. The lad or lass is harnessed over the shoulders and back with a strong leathern girth, which, behind, is furnished with an iron-hook, which is attached to a chain fastened to the coal-cart or slype. The dresses of these girls are made of coarse hempen stuff, fitting close to the figures; the coverings to their heads are made of the same material. Little or no flannel is used, and their clothing, being of an absorbent nature, frequently gets completely saturated shortly after descending the pit. We quote more of the evidence obtained by the commissioners. It scarcely needs any comment:—

"Margaret Hipps, seventeen years old, putter, Stoney Rigg Colliery, Stirlingshire: 'My employment, after reaching the wall-face, is to fill my bagie, or slype, with two and a half to three hundred-weight of coal. I then hook it on to my chain and drag it through the seam, which is twenty-six to twenty-eight inches high, till I get to the main road—a good distance, probably two hundred to four hundred yards. The pavement I drag over is wet, and I am obliged at all times to crawl on hands and feet with my bagie hung to the chain and ropes. It is sad sweating and sore fatiguing work, and frequently maims the women.'

"Sub-commissioner: 'It is almost incredible that human beings can submit to such employment, crawling on hands and knees, harnessed like horses, over soft, slushy floors, more difficult than

dragging the same weights through our lowest common sewers, and more difficult in consequence of the inclination, which is frequently one in three to one in six.'

"Agnes Moffatt, seventeen years old, coal-bearer: 'Began working at ten years of age; father took sister and I down; he gets our wages. I fill five baskets; the weight is more than twenty-two hundred-weight; it takes me twenty journeys. The work is o'er sair for females. It is no uncommon for women to lose their burden, and drop off the ladder down the dyke below; Margaret McNeil did a few weeks since, and injured both legs. When the tugs which pass over the forehead break, which they frequently do, it is very dangerous to be under with a load.'

"Margaret Jacques, seventeen years of age, coal-bearer: 'I have been seven years at coal-bearing; it is horrible sore work; it was not my choice, but we do our parents' will. I make thirty rakes a day, with two hundred-weight of coal on my creel. It is a guid distance I journey, and very dangerous on parts of the road. The distance fast increases as the coals are cut down.'

"Helen Reid, sixteen years old, coal-bearer: 'I have wrought five years in the mines in this part; my employment is carrying coal. Am frequently worked from four in the morning until six at night. I work night-work week about, (alternate weeks.) I then go down at two in the day, and come up at four and six in the morning. I can carry near two hundred-weight *on* my back. I do not like the work. Two years since the pit closed upon thirteen of us, and we were two days without food or light; nearly one day we were up to our chins in water. At last we got to an old shaft, to which we picked our way, and were heard by people watching above. Two months ago, I was filling the tubs at the pit bottom, when the gig clicked too early, and the hook caught me by my pit-clothes—the people did not hear my shrieks —my hand had fast grappled the chain, and the great height of the shaft caused me to lose my courage, and I swooned. The banksman could scarcely remove my hand—the deadly grasp saved my life.'

"Margaret Drysdale, fifteen years old, coal-putter: 'I don't like the work, but mother is dead, and father brought me down;

I had no choice. The lasses will tell you that they all like the work fine, as they think you are going to take them out of the pits. My employment is to draw the carts. I have harness, or draw-ropes on, like the horses, and pull the carts. Large carts hold seven hundred-weight and a half, the smaller five hundred-weight and a half. The roads are wet, and I have to draw the work about one hundred fathoms.'

"Katherine Logan, sixteen years old, coal-putter: 'Began to work at coal-carrying more than five years since; works in harness now; draw backward with face to tubs; the ropes and chains go under my pit-clothes; it is o'er sair work, especially where we crawl.'

"Janet Duncan, seventeen years old, coal-putter: 'Works at putting, and was a coal-bearer at Hen-Muir Pit and New Pencaitland. The carts I push contain three hundred-weight of coal, being a load and a half; it is very severe work, especially when we have to stay before the tubs, on the braes, to prevent them coming down too fast; they frequently run too quick, and knock us down; when they run over fast, we fly off the roads and let them go, or we should be crushed. Mary Peacock was severely crushed a fortnight since; is gradually recovering. I have wrought above in harvest time; it is the only other work that ever I tried my hand at, and having harvested for three seasons, am able to say that the hardest daylight work is infinitely superior to the best of coal-work.'

"Jane Wood, wife of James Wood, formerly a coal-drawer and bearer: 'Worked below more than thirty years. I have two daughters below, who really hate the employment, and often prayed to leave, but we canna do well without them just now. The severe work causes women much trouble; they frequently have premature births. Jenny McDonald, a neighbour, was laid idle six months; and William King's wife lately died from miscarriage, and a vast of women suffer from similar causes.'

"Margaret Boxter, fifty years old, coal-hewer: 'I hew the coal; have done so since my husband failed in his breath; he has been off work twelve years. I have a son, daughter, and niece working with me below, and we have sore work to get mainte-

nance. I go down early to hew the coal for my girls to draw; my son hews also. The work is not fit for women, and men could prevent it were they to labour more regular; indeed, men about this place don't wish wives to work in mines, but the masters seem to encourage it—at any rate, the masters never interfere to prevent it.' "

"The different kinds of work to which females are put in South Wales, are described in the following evidence:—

"Henrietta Frankland, eleven years old, drammer: 'When well, I draw the drams, (carts,) which contain four to five hundred-weight of coal, from the heads to the main road; I make forty-eight to fifty journeys; sister, who is two years older, works also at dramming; the work is very hard, and the long hours before the pay-day fatigue us much. The mine is wet where we work, as the water passes through the roof, and the workings are only thirty to thirty-three inches high.'

"Mary Reed, twelve years old, air-door keeper: 'Been five years in the Plymouth mine. Never leaves till the last dram (cart) is drawn past by the horse. Works from six till four or five at night. Has run home very hungry; runs along the level or hangs on a cart as it passes. Does not like the work in the dark; would not mind the daylight work.'

"Hannah Bowen, sixteen years old, windlass-woman: 'Been down two years; it is good hard work; work from seven in the morning till three or four in the afternoon at hauling the windlass. Can draw up four hundred loads of one hundred-weight and a half to four hundred-weight each.'

"Ann Thomas, sixteen years old, windlass-woman: 'Finds the work very hard; two women always work the windlass below ground. We wind up eight hundred loads. Men do not like the winding, *it is too hard work for them.*' "

The commissioners ascertained that when the work-people were in full employment, the regular hours for children and young persons were rarely less than eleven; more often they were twelve; in some districts,

they are thirteen; and, in one district, they are generally fourteen and upward. In Derbyshire, south of Chesterfield, from thirteen to sixteen hours are considered a day's work. Of the exhausting effects of such labour for so long a time, we shall scarcely need any particular evidence. But one boy, named John Bostock, told the commissioners that he had often been made to work until he was so tired as to lie down on his road home until twelve o'clock, when his mother had come and led him home; and that he had sometimes been so tired that he could not eat his dinner, but had been beaten and made to work until night. Many other cases are recorded:—

"John Rawson, collier, aged forty: 'I work at Mr. Sorby's pit, Handsworth. I think the children are worked overmuch sometimes.'—*Report*, No. 81, p. 243, l. 25.

"Peter Waring, collier, Billingby: 'I never should like my children to go in. They are not beaten; it is the work that hurts them; it is mere slavery, and nothing but it.'—Ibid. No. 125, p. 256, l. 6.

"John Hargreave, collier, Thorpe's Colliery: 'Hurrying is heavy work for children. They ought not to work till they are twelve years old, and then put two together for heavy corves.'—Ibid. No. 130, p. 256, l. 44.

"Mr. Timothy Marshall, collier, aged thirty-five, Darton: 'I think the hurrying is what hurts girls, and it is too hard work for their strength; I think that children cannot be educated after they once get to work in pits; they are both tired and even disinclined to learn when they have done work.'—Ibid. No. 141, p. 262, l. 39.

"A collier at Mr. Travis's pit: 'The children get but little schooling; six or seven out of nine or ten know nothing. They

never go to night-schools, except some odd ones. When the children get home, they cannot go to school, for they have to be up so early in the morning—soon after four—and they cannot do without rest.'—Ibid. No. 94, p. 246, l. 33.

"Mr. George Armitage, aged thirty-six, formerly collier at Silkstone, now teacher at Hayland School: 'Little can be learnt merely on Sundays, and they are too tired as well as indisposed to go to night-schools. I am decidedly of opinion that when trade is good, the work of hurriers is generally continuous; but when there are two together, perhaps the little one will have a rest while the big one is filling or riddling.'—Ibid., No. 138, p. 261, l. 24.

"William Firth, between six and seven years old, Deal Wood Pit, Flockton: 'I hurry with my sister. I don't like to be in pit. I was crying to go out this morning. It tires me a good deal.'—Ibid. No. 218, p. 282, l. 11.

"John Wright, hurrier in Thorpe's colliery: 'I shall be nine years old next Whitsuntide. It tires me much. It tires my arms. I have been two years in the pit, and have been hurrying all the time. It tries the small of my arms.'—Ibid. No. 129, p. 256, l. 31.

"Daniel Dunchfield: 'I am going in ten; I am more tired in the forenoon than at night; it makes my back ache; I work all day the same as the other boys; I rest me when I go home at night; I never go to play at night; I get my supper and go to bed.' —Ibid. No. 63, p. 238, l. 32.

"George Glossop, aged twelve: 'I help to fill and hurry, and am always tired at night when I've done.'—Ibid. No. 50, p. 236, l. 21.

"Martin Stanley: 'I tram by myself, and find it very hard work. It tires me in my legs and shoulders every day.'—Ibid. No. 69, p. 240, l. 27.

"Charles Hoyle: 'I was thirteen last January. I work in the thin coal-pit. I find it very hard work. We work at night one week, and in the day the other. It tires me very much sometimes. It tires us most in the legs, especially when we have to go on our hands and feet. I fill as well as hurry.'—Ibid. No. 78, p. 242, l. 41.

"Jonathan Clayton, thirteen and a half years old, Soap Work Colliery, Sheffield: 'Hurrying is very hard work; when I got home at night, I was knocked up.'—Ibid. No. 6, p. 227, l. 48.

"Andrew Roger, aged seventeen years: 'I work for my father, who is an undertaker. I get, and have been getting two years. I find it very hard work indeed; it tires me very much; I can hardly get washed of a night till nine o'clock, I am so tired.'—Ibid. No. 60, p. 237, l. 49.

["'This witness,' says the sub-commissioner, 'when examined in the evening after his work was over, ached so much that he could not stand upright.']—Ibid. s. 109; App. pt. i. p. 181.

"Joseph Reynard, aged nineteen, Mr. Stancliffe's pit, Mirfield: 'I began hurrying when I was nine; I get now; I cannot hurry, because one leg is shorter than the other. I have had my hip bad since I was fifteen. I am very tired at nights. I worked in a wet place to-day. I have worked in places as wet as I have been in to-day.'

["'I examined Joseph Reynard; he has several large abscesses in his thigh, from hip-joint disease. The thigh-bone is dislocated from the same cause; the leg is about three inches shorter; two or three of the abscesses are now discharging. No appearance of puberty from all the examinations I made. I should not think him more than eleven or twelve years of age, except from his teeth. I think him quite unfit to follow any occupation, much less the one he now occupies.

Signed, "'U. Bradbury, Surgeon.']

"'This case,' says the sub-commissioner, 'is one reflecting the deepest discredit on his employers.'—*Symons, Evidence*, No. 272; App. pt. i. p. 298, l. 29.

"Elizabeth Eggley, sixteen years old: 'I find my work very much too hard for me. I hurry alone. It tires me in my arms and back most. I am sure it is very hard work, and tires us very much; it is too hard work for girls to do. We sometimes go to sleep before we get to bed.'—Ibid. No. 114, p. 252, l. 44.

"Ann Wilson, aged ten and a half years, Messrs. Smith's colliery: 'Sometimes the work tires us when we have a good bit

to do; it tires me in my back. I hurry by myself. I push with my head.'—Ibid. No. 229, p. 224, l. 12.

"Elizabeth Day, hurrier, Messrs. Hopwood's pit, Barnsley: 'It is very hard work for us all. It is harder work than we ought to do, a deal. I have been lamed in my back, and strained in my back.'—Ibid. No. 80, p. 244, l. 33.

"Mary Shaw: 'I am nineteen years old. I hurry in the pit you were in to-day. I have ever been much tired with my work.' —Ibid. No. 123, p. 249, l. 38.

"Ann Eggley, hurrier in Messrs. Thorpe's colliery: 'The work is far too hard for me; the sweat runs off me all over sometimes. I am very tired at night. Sometimes when we get home at night, we have not power to wash us, and then we go to bed. Sometimes we fall asleep in the chair. Father said last night it was both a shame and a disgrace for girls to work as we do, but there was nought else for us to do. The girls are always tired.' —Ibid. No. 113, p. 252, l. 17.

"Elizabeth Coats: 'I hurry with my brother. It tires me a great deal, and tires my back and arms.'—Ibid. No. 115, p. 252, l. 59.

"Elizabeth Ibbitson, at Mr. Harrison's pit, Gomersel: 'I don't like being at pit; I push the corf with my head, and it hurts me, and is sore.'—Ibid. No. 266, p. 292, l. 17.

"Margaret Gomley, Lindley Moor, aged nine: 'Am very tired.' —*Scriven, Evidence*, No. 9; App. pt. ii. p. 103, l. 34.

"James Mitchell, aged twelve, Messrs. Holt and Hebblewaite's: 'I am very tired when I get home; it is enough to tire a horse; and stooping so much makes it bad.'—Ibid. No. 2, p. 101, l. 32.

"William Whittaker, aged sixteen, Mr. Rawson's colliery: 'I am always very tired when I go home.'—Ibid. No. 13, p. 104, l. 55.

"George Wilkinson, aged thirteen, Low Moor: 'Are you tired now? Nay. Were you tired then? Yea. What makes the difference? I can hurry a deal better now.'—*W. R. Wood, Esq., Evidence*, No. 18, App. pt. ii. p. *h* 11, l. 30.

"John Stevenson, aged fourteen, Low Moor: 'Has worked in a coal-pit eight years; went in at six years old; used to rue to go in; does not rue now; it was very hard when he went in, and

"I were nobbud a right little one." Was not strong enough when he first went; had better have been a little bigger; used to be very tired; did not when he first went. I waur ill tired.' —Ibid. No. 15, p. *h* 10, l. 39.

"Jabez Scott, aged fifteen, Bowling Iron Works: 'Work is very hard; sleeps well sometimes; sometimes is very ill tired and cannot sleep so well.'—Ibid. No. 38, p. *h* 10, l. 29.

"William Sharpe, Esq., F.R.S., surgeon, Bradford, states: 'That he has for twenty years professionally attended at the Low Moor Iron Works; that there are occasionally cases of deformity, and also bad cases of scrofula, apparently induced by the boys being too early sent into the pits, by their working beyond their strength, by their constant stooping, and by occasionally working in water.' "—Ibid. No. 60, p. *h* 27, l. 45.

The statements of the children, as will be seen, are confirmed by the evidence of the adult work-people, in which we also find some further developments:—

"William Fletcher, aged thirty-three, collier, West Hallam: 'Considers the collier's life a very hard one both for man and boy, the latter full as hard as the former.'—*Report*, No. 37, p. 279, l. 17.

"John Beasley, collier, aged forty-nine, Shipley: 'He has known instances where the children have been so overcome with the work, as to cause them to go off in a decline; he has seen those who could not get home without their father's assistance, and have fallen asleep before they could be got to bed; has known children of six years old sent to the pit, but thinks there are none at Shipley under seven or eight; it is his opinion a boy is too weak to stand the hours, even to drive between, until he is eight or nine years old; the boys go down at six in the morning, and has known them kept down until nine or ten, until they are almost ready to exhaust; the children and young persons work the same hours as the men; the children are obliged to work in the night if the wagon-road is out of repair, or the water coming on them; it happens sometimes two or three times in the week;

they then go down at six P. M. to six A. M., and have from ten minutes to half an hour allowed for supper, according to the work they have to do; they mostly ask the children who have been at work the previous day to go down with them, but seldom have to oblige them; when he was a boy, he has worked for thirty-six hours running many a time, and many more besides himself have done so.'—Ibid. No. 40, p. 274, l. 23.

"William Wardle, aged forty, Eastwood: 'There is no doubt colliers are much harder worked than labourers; indeed, it is the hardest work under heaven.'—Ibid. No. 84, p. 287, l. 51.

"Samuel Richards, aged forty, Awsworth: 'There are Sunday-schools when they will go; but when boys have been beaten, knocked about, and covered with sludge all the week, they want to be in bed to rest all day on Sunday.'—Ibid. No. 166, p. 307, l. 58.

"William Sellers, operative, aged twenty-two, Butterley Company: 'When he first worked in the pit, he has been so tired that he slept as he walked.'—Ibid. No. 222, p. 319, l. 35.

"William Knighton, aged twenty-four, Denby: 'He remembers "mony" a time he has dropped asleep with the meat in his mouth through fatigue; it is those butties—they are the very devil; they impose upon them in one way, then in another.'—Ibid. No. 314, p. 334, l. 42.

"—— ——, engine-man, Babbington: 'Has, when working whole days, often seen the children lie down on the pit-bank and go to sleep, they were so tired.'—Ibid. No. 137, p. 300, l. 10.

"John Attenborough, schoolmaster, Greasley: 'Has observed that the collier children are more tired and dull than the others, but equally anxious to learn.'—Ibid. No. 153, p. 304, l. 122.

"Ann Birkin: 'Is mother to Thomas and Jacob, who work in Messrs. Fenton's pits; they have been so tired after a whole day's work, that she has at times had to wash them and lift them into bed.'—Ibid. No. 81, p. 285, l. 59.

"Hannah Neale, Butterley Park: 'They come home so tired that they become stiff, and can hardly get to bed; Constantine, the one ten years old, formerly worked in the same pit as his brothers, but about a half a year since his toe was cut off by the

bind falling; notwithstanding this, the loader made him work until the end of the day, although in the greatest pain. He was out of work more than four months owing to this accident.'—Ibid. No. 237, p. 320, l. 51.

"Ellen Wagstaff, Watnall: 'Has five children, three at Trough lane and two at Willow lane, Greasley; one at Trough lane is eighteen, one fourteen, one thirteen years of age; and those at Willow lane are sixteen and nineteen; they are variously employed; the youngest was not seven years old when he first went to the pits. The whole have worked since they were seven or seven and a half; they have worked from six to eight; from six to two for half days, no meal-time in half days; she has known them when at full work so tired when they first worked, that you could not hear them speak, and they fell asleep before they could eat their suppers; it has grieved her to the heart to see them.'—Ibid. No. 104, p. 292, l. 18.

"Ann Wilson, Underwood: 'Is stepmother to Matthew Wilson and mother to Richard Clarke. Has heard what they have said, and believes it to be true; has known them when they work whole days they have come home so tired and dirty, that they could scarcely be prevented lying down on the ashes by the fireside, and could not take their clothes off; has had to do it for them, and take them to the brook and wash them, and has sat up most of the night to get their clothes dry. The next morning they have gone to work like bears to the stake.'—Ibid. No. 112, p. 294, l. 5.

"Hannah Brixton, Babbington: 'The butties slave them past any thing. Has frequently had them drop asleep as soon as they have got in the house, and complain of their legs and arms aching very bad.'—Ibid. No. 149, p. 302, l. 44.

"Michael Wilkins: 'Never has a mind for his victuals; never feels himself hungry.'

"John Charlton: 'Thinks the stythe makes him bad so that he cannot eat his bait, and often brings it all home with him again, or eats very little of it.'

"Michael Richardson: 'He never has much appetite; and the dust often blacks his victuals. Is always dry and thirsty.'

"William Beaney: 'Has thrown up his victuals often when he came home; thinks the bad air made him do this.'

"John Thompson: 'Often throws up his food.'

"Thomas Newton: 'Threw up his victuals last night when he came home. Never does so down in the pit, but often does when he comes home.'

"Moses Clerk: 'Throws up his victuals nearly every day at home and down in the pit.'

"Thomas Martin: 'Many times feels sick, and feels headache, and throws up his food. Was well before he went down in the pit.'

"Thomas Fawcett: 'Many a night falls sick; and he many times throws up his meat when he is in bed. Sometimes feels bad and sick in the morning.'

"George Alder: 'Has been unwell of late with the hard work. Has felt very sick and weak all this last week.' (Looks very pale and unwell.)

"John Charlton: 'Often obliged to give over. Has been off five days in the last month. Each of these days was down in the pit and obliged to come up again.'

"John Laverick and others: 'Many times they fell sick down in the pit. Sometimes they have the heart-burn; sometimes they force up their meat again. Some boys are off a week from being sick; occasionally they feel pains.'

"Six trappers: 'Sometimes they feel sick upon going to work in the morning. Sometimes bring up their breakfasts from their stomachs again. Different boys at different times do this.'

"George Short. 'It is bad air where he is, and makes him bad; makes small spots come out upon him, (small pimples,) which he thinks is from the air, and he takes physic to stop them. His head works very often, and he feels sickish sometimes.'

"Nichol Hudderson: 'The pit makes him sick. Has been very bad in his health ever since he went down in the pit. Was very healthy before. The heat makes him sick. The sulphur rising up the shaft as he goes down makes his head work. Often so sick that he cannot eat when he gets up, at least he

cannot eat very much. About a half a year since, a boy named John Huggins was very sick down in the pit, and wanted to come up, but the keeper would not let him ride, (come up,) and he died of fever one week afterward.'

["The father of this lad and his brother fully corroborate this statement, and the father says the doctor told him that if he (the boy) had not been kept in the pit, he might have been, perhaps, saved. This boy never had any thing the matter with him before he went down into the pit."—*Leifchild, Evidences*, Nos. 156, 169, 270, 83, 110, 142, 143, 374, 194, 364, 135, 100, 101; App. pt. i. p. 582 *et seq.* See also the statement of witnesses, Nos. 315, 327, 351, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 365, 377, 381, 382, 384, 403, 434, 454, 455, 457, 464, 465, 466.]

Similar statements are made by all classes of witnesses in some other districts. Thus, in Shropshire:—

"A surgeon who did not wish his name to be published: 'They are subject to hypertrophy of the heart, no doubt laying the foundation of such disease at the early age of from eight to thirteen years.'—*Mitchell, Evidence*, No. 45; App. pt. i. p. 81, l. 16.

"Mr. Michael Thomas Sadler, surgeon, Barnsley: 'I have found diseases of the heart in adult colliers, which it struck me arose from violent exertion. I know of no trade about here where the work is harder.'—*Symons, Evidence*, No. 139; App. pt. i. p. 261, l. 36.

"Mr. Pearson, surgeon to the dispensary, Wigan: 'They are very subject to diseases of the heart.'—*Kennedy, Report*, l. 304; App. pt. ii. p. 189.

"Dr. William Thompson, Edinburgh: 'Workers in coal-mines are exceedingly liable to suffer from irregular action, and ultimately organic diseases of the heart.'—*Franks, Evidence*, App. pt. i. p. 409.

"Scott Alison, M. D., East Lothian: 'I found diseases of the heart very common among colliers at all ages, from boyhood up to old age. The most common of them were inflammation of that organ, and of its covering, the pericardium, simple enlarge-

ment or hypertrophy, contraction of the auriculo-ventricular communications, and of the commencement of the aorta. These symptoms were well marked, attended for the most part with increase of the heart's action, the force of its contraction being sensibly augmented, and, in many cases, especially those of hypertrophy, much and preternaturally extended over the chest.'—Ibid. p. 417.

"Mr. Thomas Batten, surgeon, Coleford: 'A boy about thirteen years of age, in the Parkend Pits, died of *hæmorrhagia purpurea*, (a suffusion of blood under the cuticle,) brought on by too much exertion of the muscles and whole frame.'—*Waring, Evidence*, No. 36; App. pt. ii. p. 24, l. 21.

To this list of diseases arising from great muscular exertion, must be added rupture:—

"Dr. Farell, Sheffield: 'Many of them are ruptured; nor is this by any means uncommon among lads—arising, in all probability, form over-exertion.'—*Symons, Evidence*, No. 47, App. pt. i. p. 286, l. 2.

"Mr. Pearson, surgeon to the dispensary, Wigan: 'Colliers are often ruptured, and they often come to me for advice.'—*Kennedy, Report*, l. 304; App. pt. ii. p. 189.

"Andrew Grey: 'Severe ruptures occasioned by lifting coal. Many are ruptured on both sides. I am, and suffer severely, and a vast number of men here are also.'—*Franks, Evidence*, No. 147; App. pt. i. p. 463, l. 61.

But employment in the coal-mines produces another series of diseases incomparably more painful and fatal, partly referable to excessive muscular exertion, and partly to the state of the place of work—that is, to the foul air from imperfect ventilation, and the wetness from inefficient drainage. Of the diseases of the lungs produced by employment in the mines, asthma is the most frequent.

"Mr. William Hartell Baylis: 'The working of the mines brings on asthma.'—*Mitchell, Evidence*, No. 7; App. pt. i. p. 65, l. 31.

"A surgeon who does not wish his name to be published: 'Most colliers, at the age of thirty, become asthmatic. There are few attain that age without having the respiratory apparatus disordered.'—Ibid. No. 45, p. 81, l. 15.

"Mr. George Marcy, clerk of the Wellington Union: 'Many applications are made from miners for relief on account of sickness, and chiefly from asthmatic complaints, when arrived at an advanced age. At forty, perhaps, the generality suffer much from asthma. Those who have applied have been first to the medical officer, who has confirmed what they said.'—Ibid. No. 46, p. 81, l. 44.

"'I met with very few colliers above forty years of age, who, if they had not a confirmed asthmatic disease, were not suffering from difficult breathing.'—*Fellows, Report*, s. 57; App. pt. ii. p. 256.

"Phœbe Gilbert, Watnall, Messrs. Barber and Walker: 'She thinks they are much subject to asthma. Her first husband, who died aged 57, was unable to work for seven years on that account.' —*Fellows, Evidence*, No. 105; App. pt. ii. p. 256.

"William Wardle, collier, forty years of age, Eastwood: 'There are some who are asthmatical, and many go double.'—Ibid. No. 84, p. 287, l. 40.

"Mr. Henry Hemmingway, surgeon, Dewsbury: 'When children are working where carbonic acid gas prevails, they are rendered more liable to affections of the brain and lungs. This acid prevents the blood from its proper decarbonization as it passes from the heart to the lungs. It does not get properly quit of the carbon.'—*Symons, Evidence*, No. 221; App. pt. i. p. 282, l. 38.

"Mr. Uriah Bradbury, surgeon, Mirfield: 'They suffer from asthma.'—Ibid. No. 199, p. 278, l. 58.

"Mr. J. B. Greenwood, surgeon, Cleckheaton: 'The cases which have come before me professionally have been chiefly affections of the chest and asthma, owing to the damp underfoot, and also to the dust which arises from the working of the coal.' —Ibid. No. 200, p. 279, l. 8.

"J. Ibetson, collier, aged fifty-three, Birkenshaw: 'I have suffered from asthma, and am regularly knocked up. A collier cannot stand the work regularly. He must stop now and then, or he will be mashed up before any time.'—Ibid. No. 267, p. 292, l. 42.

"Joseph Barker, collier, aged forty-three, Windybank Pit: 'I have a wife and two children; one of them is twenty-two years old; he is mashed up, (that is, he is asthmatical,) he has been as good a worker as ever worked in a skin.'—*Scriven, Evidence*, No. 14; App. pt. ii. p. 104, l. 60.

"Mr. George Canney, surgeon, Bishop Aukland: 'Do the children suffer from early employment in the pits?' 'Yes, seven and eight is a very early age, and the constitution must suffer in consequence. It is injurious to be kept in one position so long, and in the dark. They go to bed when they come home, and enjoy very little air. I think there is more than the usual proportion of pulmonary complaints.'—*Mitchell, Evidence*, No. 97; App. pt. i. p. 154, l. 2.

"Mr. Headlam, physician, Newcastle: 'Diseases of respiration are more common among pitmen than among others, distinctly referable to the air in which they work. The air contains a great proportion of carbonic gas, and carburetted hydrogen. These diseases of the respiratory organs arise from the breathing of these gases, principally of the carbonic acid gas.—*Leifchild, Evidence*, No. 499; App. pt. i. p. 67, l. 11.

"Mr. Heath, of Newcastle, surgeon: 'More than usually liable to asthma; mostly between thirty and forty years of age. A person always working in the broken would be more liable to asthma. Asthma is of very slow growth, and it is difficult to say when it begins. Custom and habit will not diminish the evil effects, but will diminish the sensibility to these evils.'—Ibid. No. 497, p. 665, l. 10–14.

"Matthew Blackburn, driver, fifteen years of age, Heaton Colliery: 'Has felt shortness of breath. Helps up sometimes, but is bound to drive. Cannot help up sometimes for shortness of breath. His legs often work, (ache;) his shoulders work sometimes. Working in a wet place.'—Ibid. No. 27, p. 573, l. 34.

"Dr. S. Scott Alison, East Lothian: 'Between the twentieth and thirtieth year the colliers decline in bodily vigour, and become more and more spare; the difficulty of breathing progresses, and they find themselves very desirous of some remission from their labour. This period is fruitful in acute diseases, such as fever, inflammation of the lungs, pleura, and many other ailments, the product of over-exertion, exposure to cold and wet, violence, insufficient clothing, intemperance, and foul air. For the first few years chronic bronchitis is usually found alone, and unaccompanied by disease of the body or lungs. The patient suffers more or less difficulty of breathing, which is affected by changes of the weather, and by variations in the weight of the atmosphere. He coughs frequently, and the expectoration is composed, for the most part, of white frothy and yellowish mucous fluid, occasionally containing blackish particles of carbon, the result of the combustion of the lamp, and also of minute coal-dust. At first, and indeed for several years, the patient, for the most part, does not suffer much in his general health, eating heartily, and retaining his muscular strength in consequence. The disease is rarely, if ever, entirely cured; and if the collier be not carried off by some other lesion in the mean time, this disease ultimately deprives him of life by a slow and lingering process. The difficulty of breathing becomes more or less permanent, the expectoration becomes very abundant, effusions of water take place in the chest, the feet swell, and the urine is secreted in small quantity; the general health gradually breaks up, and the patient, after reaching premature old age, slips into the grave at a comparatively early period, with perfect willingness on his part, and no surprise on that of his family and friends.'—*Franks, Evidence*, App. pt. i. p. 412, 415, Appendix A.

"John Duncan, aged fifty-nine, hewer, Pencaitland: 'Mining has caused my breath to be affected, and I am, like many other colliers, obliged to hang upon my children for existence. The want of proper ventilation in the pits is the chief cause. No part requires more looking to than East Lothian; the men die off like rotten sheep.'—Ibid. No. 150, p. 464, l. 28.

"George Hogg, thirty-two years of age, coal-hewer, Pencait-

land: 'Unable to labour much now, as am fashed with bad breath; the air below is very bad; until lately no ventilation existed.'—Ibid. No. 153, p. 406, l. 46. See also Witnesses, Nos. 4, 36, 53, 131, 152, 155, 175, 275, 277, &c.: 'The confined air and dust in which they work is apt to render them asthmatic, as well as to unfit them for labour at an earlier period of life than is the case in other employments.'—*Tancred, Report*, s. 99, App. pt. i. p. 345.

"Dr. Adams, Glasgow: 'Amongst colliers, bronchitis or asthma is very prevalent among the older hands.'—*Tancred, Evidence*, No. 9; App. pt. i. p. 361, l. 44.

"Mr. Peter Williams, surgeon, Holiwell, North Wales: 'The chief diseases to which they are liable are those of the bronchiæ. Miners and colliers, by the age of forty, generally become affected by chronic bronchitis, and commonly before the age of sixty fall martyrs to the disease. The workmen are, for the most part, very healthy and hardy, until the symptoms of affections of the bronchial tubes show themselves.'—*H. H. Jones, Evidence*, No. 95; App. pt. ii. p. 407, l. 8.

"Jeremiah Bradley, underground agent, Plaskynaston: 'The men are apt to get a tightness of breath, and become unfit for the pits, even before sixty.'—Ibid. No. 30, p. 383, l. 8.

"Amongst colliers in South Wales the diseases most prevalent are the chronic diseases of the respiratory organs, especially asthma and bronchitis.'—*Franks, Report*, s. 64; App. pt. ii. p. 484.

"David Davis, contractor, Gilvachvargoed colliery, Glamorganshire: 'I am of opinion that miners are sooner disabled and off work than other mechanics, for they suffer from shortness of breath long before they are off work. Shortness of breath may be said to commence from forty to fifty years of age.'—*Franks, Evidence*, No. 178; App. pt. ii. p. 533, l. 32.

"Richard Andrews, overseer, Llancyach, Glamorganshire: 'The miners about here are very subject to asthmatic complaints.' Ibid. No. 152; p. 529, l. 7.

"Mr. Frederick Evans, clerk and accountant for the Dowlais Collieries, Monmouthshire: 'Asthma is a prevalent disease

among colliers.'—*R. W. Jones, Evidence*, No. 121; App. pt. ii. p. 646, l. 48.

"Mr. David Mushet, Forest of Dean: 'The men generally become asthmatic from fifty to fifty-five years of age.'—*Waring, Evidence*, No. 37; App. pt. ii. p. 25, l. 3.

"'Asthmatic and other bronchial affections are common among the older colliers and miners.'—*Waring, Report*, s. 72; App. pt. ii. p. 6.

"Mr. W. Brice, clerk, Coal Barton and Vobster Collieries, North Somersetshire: 'The work requires the full vigour of a man, and they are apt, at this place, to get asthmatical from the gas and foul air.'—*Stewart, Evidence*, No. 7; App. pt. ii. p. 50, l. 49.

"James Beacham, coal-breaker, Writhlington, near Radstock: 'Many of the miners suffer from "tight breath."'—Ibid. No. 32; p. 56, l. 31.

Of that disease which is peculiar to colliers, called "black spittle," much evidence is given by many medical witnesses and others:—

"Mr. Cooper, surgeon, of Bilston, gives the following account of this malady when it appears in its mildest form: 'Frequently it occurs that colliers appear at the offices of medical men, complaining of symptoms of general debility, which appear to arise from inhalation of certain gases in the mines, (probably an excess of carbonic.) These patients present a pallid appearance, are affected with headache, (without febrile symptoms,) and constriction of the chest; to which may be added dark bronchial expectoration and deficient appetite. Gentle aperients, mild stomachics, and rest from labour above ground, restore them in a week or so, and they are perhaps visited at intervals with a relapse, if the state of the atmosphere or the ill ventilation of the mine favour the development of deleterious gas.'—*Mitchell, Evidence*, No. 3; App. pt. i. p. 62, l. 48."

In other districts this disease assumes a much more formidable character:—

"Dr. Thompson, of Edinburgh, states that, 'The workmen in coal mines occasionally die of an affection of the lungs, accompanied with the expectoration of a large quantity of matter of a deep black colour, this kind of expectoration continuing long after they have, from choice or illness, abandoned their subterranean employment; and the lungs of such persons are found, on examination after death, to be most deeply impregnated with black matter. This black deposition may occur to a very considerable extent in the lungs of workers in coal-mines, without being accompanied with any black expectoration, or any other phenomena of active disease, and may come to light only after death has been occasioned by causes of a different nature, as by external injuries.'—*Franks*, Appendix A, No. 1; App. pt. i. p. 409.

"Dr. S. Scott Alison: 'Spurious melanosis, or "black spit" of colliers, is a disease of pretty frequent occurrence among the older colliers, and among those men who have been employed in cutting and blasting stone dykes in the collieries. The symptoms are emaciation of the whole body, constant shortness and quickness of breath, occasional stitches in the sides, quick pulse, usually upward of one hundred in the minute, hacking cough day and night, attended by a copious expectoration, for the most part perfectly black, and very much the same as thick blacking in colour and consistence, but occasionally yellowish and mucous, or white and frothy; respiration is cavernous in some parts, and dull in others; a wheezing noise is heard in the bronchial passages, from the presence of an inordinate quantity of fluid; the muscles of respiration become very prominent, the neck is shortened, the chest being drawn up, the nostrils are dilated, and the countenance is of an anxious aspect. The strength gradually wasting, the collier, who has hitherto continued at his employment, finds that he is unable to work six days in the week, and goes under ground perhaps only two or three days in that time; in the course of time, he finds an occasional half-day's employment as much as he can manage, and when only a few weeks' or months' journey from the grave, ultimately takes a final leave of his labour. This disease is never cured, and if the unhappy

victim of an unwholesome occupation is not hurried off by some more acute disease, or by violence, it invariably ends in the death of the sufferer. Several colliers have died of this disease under my care.'—Ibid. Appendix A, No. 2; App. pt. i. p. 415, 416.

"Dr. Makellar, Pencaitland, East Lothian: 'The most serious and fatal disease which I have been called to treat, connected with colliers, is a carbonaceous infiltration into the substance of the lungs. It is a disease which has long been overlooked, on account of the unwillingness which formerly existed among that class of people to allow examination of the body after death; but of late such a prejudice has in a great measure been removed. From the nature of Pencaitland coal-works, the seams of coal being thin when compared with other coal-pits, mining operations are carried on with difficulty, and, in such a situation, there is a deficiency in the supply of atmospheric gas, thereby causing difficulty in breathing, and, consequently, the inhalation of the carbon which the lungs in exhalation throw off, and also any carbonaceous substance floating in this impure atmosphere. I consider the pulmonary diseases of coal-miners to be excited chiefly by two causes, viz. first, by running stone-mines with the use of gunpowder; and, secondly, coal-mining in an atmosphere charged with lamp-smoke and the carbon exhaled from the lungs. All who are engaged at coal-pits here, are either employed as coal or stone miners; and the peculiar disease to which both parties are liable varies considerably according to the employment.'—Ibid. Appendix A, No. 3, p. 422. See also witnesses Nos. 7, 44, 112, 144, 146. For a full account of this disease, see reports of Drs. Alison, Makellar, and Reid, in the Appendix to the sub-commissioner's report for the East of Scotland."

Dr. Makellar gives the following remarkable evidence as to the efficacy of ventilation in obviating the production of this disease:—

"The only effectual remedy for this disease is a free admission of pure air, and to be so applied as to remove the confined smoke,

both as to stone-mining and coal-mining, and also the introduction of some other mode of lighting such pits than by oil. I know many coal-pits where there is no *black-spit*, nor was it ever known, and, on examination, I find that there is and ever has been in them a free circulation of air. For example, the Penstone coal-works, which join Pencaitland, has ever been free of this disease; but many of the Penstone colliers, on coming to work at Pencaitland pit, have been seized with, and died of, this disease. Penstone has always good air, while it is quite the contrary at Pencaitland.' —Ibid. Appendix A, No. 3; App. pt. i. p. 422."

Other diseases, produced by employment in coal-mines, less fatal, but scarcely less painful, are rheumatism and inflammation of the joints.

Mr. William Hartell Baylis states that working in the cold and wet often brings on rheumatism. "More suffer from this than from any other complaint."* Asthma and rheumatism, which are so prevalent in other districts, are very rare in Warwickshire and Leicestershire.† But, in Derbyshire, "rheumatism is very general. I believe you will scarcely meet a collier, and ask him what he thinks of the weather, but he will in reply say, 'Why, his back or shoulders have or have not pained him as much as usual.' "‡

George Tweddell, surgeon, Houghton-le-Spring, South Durham, says, in answer to the question—Are miners much subject to rheumatism?—"Not particularly so. Our mines are dry; but there is one mine which is wet, where the men often complain of rheumatism."§

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* Mitchell, Evidence, No. 7; App. pt. i. p. 65, l. 31.

† Ibid. in loco. ‡ Fellows, Report, s. 58; App. pt. ii. p. 256.

§ Mitchell, Evidence, No. 99; App. pt. i. p. 155, l. 8.

Similar evidence is given by the medical and other witnesses in all other districts. Wherever the mines are not properly drained, and are, therefore, wet and cold, the work-people are invariably afflicted with rheumatism, and with painful diseases of the glands.

The sub-commissioner for the Forest of Dean gives the following account of a painful disease of the joints common in that district:—

"'The men employed in cutting down the coal are subject to inflammation of the *bursæ*, both in the knees and elbows, from the constant pressure and friction on these joints in their working postures. When the seams are several feet thick, they begin by kneeling and cutting away the exterior portion of the base. They proceed undermining till they are obliged to lie down on their sides, in order to work beneath the mass as far as the arm can urge the pick, for the purpose of bringing down a good head of coal. In this last posture the elbow forms a pivot, resting on the ground, on which the arm of the workman oscillates as he plies his sharp pick. It is easy to comprehend how this action, combined with the pressure, should affect the delicate cellular membrane of this joint, and bring on the disease indicated. The thin seams of coal are necessarily altogether worked in a horizontal posture.'—*Waring, Report*, s. 63–66; App. pt. ii. p. 5, 6.

"Twenty boys at the Walker Colliery: 'The twenty witnesses, when examined collectively, say, that the way is so very dirty, and the pit so warm, that the lads often get tired very soon.'—*Leifchild, Evidence*, No. 291; App. pt. i. p. 627, 1. 661.

"Nineteen boys examined together, of various ages, of whom the spokesman was William Holt, seventeen years old, putter: 'The bad air when they were whiles working in the broken, makes them sick. Has felt weak like in his legs at those times. Was weary like. Has gone on working, but very slowly. Many a one has had to come home before having a fair start, from bad air and hard work. Hours are too long. Would sooner work less hours and get less money.'—Ibid. No. 300; p. 629, 1. 1.

"Twenty-three witnesses assembled state: 'That their work is too hard for them, and they feel sore tired; that some of them constantly throw up their meat from their stomachs; that their heads often work, (ache;) the back sometimes; and the legs feel weak.'—Ibid. No. 354; p. 639, l. 18.

"John Wilkinson, aged thirteen, Piercy Main Colliery: 'Was in for a double shift about five weeks ago, and fell asleep about one o'clock P. M., as he was going to lift the limmers off to join the rolleys together, and got himself lamed by the horse turning about and jamming one of his fingers. Split his finger. Was off a week from this accident. Sometimes feels sick down in the pit; felt so once or twice last fortnight. Whiles his head works, (aches,) and he has pains in his legs, as if they were weak. Feels pains in his knees. Thinks the work is hard for foals, more so than for others.'—Ibid. No. 60; p. 579, l. 22.

"John Middlemas: 'Sometimes, but very rarely, they work double shift; that is, they go down at four o'clock A. M. and do not come up until four o'clock P. M. in the day after that, thus stopping down thirty-six hours, without coming up, sometimes; and sometimes they come up for half an hour, and then go down again. Another worked for twenty-four hours last week, and never came up at all. Another has stopped down thirty-six hours, without coming up at all, twice during the last year. When working this double shift they go to bed directly they come home.'—Ibid. No. 98; p. 588, l. 42.

"Michael Turner, helper-up, aged fourteen and a half, Gosforth Colliery: 'Mostly he puts up hill the full corves. Many times the skin is rubbed off his back and off his feet. His head works (aches) very often, almost every week. His legs work so sometimes that he can hardly trail them. Is at hard work now, shoving rolleys and hoisting the crane; the former is the hardest work. His back works very often, so that he has sometimes to sit down for half a minute or so.'—Ibid. No. 145; p. 598, l. 58.

"George Short, aged nearly sixteen: 'Hoists a crane. His head works very often, and he feels sickish sometimes, and drowsy sometimes, especially if he sits down. Has always been

drowsy since he went there. Twice he has worked three shifts following, of twelve hours each shift; never came up at all during the thirty-six hours; was sleepy, but had no time to sleep. Has many times worked double shift of nineteen hours, and he does this now nearly every pay Friday night. A vast of boys work in this shift, ten or eleven, or sometimes more. The boys are very tired and sleepy.'—Ibid. No. 191; p. 606, l. 41.

"John Maffin, sixteen years old, putter, Gosforth Colliery: 'Was strong before he went down pits, but is not so now, from being overhard wrought, and among bad air.'—Ibid. No. 141; p. 598, l. 2.

"Robert Hall, seventeen years old, half marrow, Felling Colliery: 'The work of putting makes his arms weak, and his legs work all the day; makes his back work. Is putting to the dip now in a heavy place. Each one takes his turn to use the "soams," (the drawing-straps;) one pulls with them, and the other shoves behind. Both are equally hard. If it is a very heavy place there are helpers-up, but not so many as they want. Has known one sore strained by putting.'

"John Peel, aged thirteen: 'Is now off from this. Is healthy in general, but is now and then off from this work.'—Ibid. No. 325; p. 634, l. 11.

"Michael Richardson, fifteen years old, putter, St. Lawrence Main Colliery: 'About three quarters of a year since he wrought double shift every other night; or, rather, he worked three times in eleven days for thirty-six hours at a time, without coming up the pit. About six months ago he worked three shifts following, of twelve hours each shift, and never stopped work more than a few minutes now and then, or came up the pit till he was done. There was now and then some night-work to do, and the over-man asked him to stop, and he could not say no, or else he (the over-man) would have frowned on him, and stopped him, perhaps, of some helpers-up. Thinks the hours for lads ought to be shortened, and does not know whether it would not be better even if their wages were less.'—Ibid. No. 270; p. 623, l. 32.

"James Glass, eighteen years old, putter, Walbottle: 'Puts a tram by himself. Has no helper-up, and no assistance. Mostly

puts a full tram up. Is putting from a distance now. Mostly the trams are put up by one person. Was off work the week before last three days, by being sick. Was then putting in the night shift, and had to go home and give over. Could not work. His head works nearly every day. He is always hitting his head against stone roofs. His arms work very often. Has to stoop a good deal. The weight of his body lies upon his arms when he is putting. The skin is rubbed off his back very often.'—Ibid. No. 244; p. 619, l. 27.

"Mr. James Anderson, a Home Missionary, residing in Easington Lane, Hetton-le-Hole, in reply to queries proposed, handed in the following written evidence: 'The boys go too soon to work: I have seen boys at work not six years of age, and though their work is not hard, still they have long hours, so that when they come home they are quite spent. I have often seen them lying on the floor, fast asleep. Then they often fall asleep in the pit, and have been killed. Not long ago a boy fell asleep, lay down on the way, and the wagons killed him. Another boy was killed; it was supposed he had fallen asleep when driving his wagon, and fallen off, and was killed.'—Ibid. No. 446; p. 655, l. 62."

The children employed in the mines and collieries are distinguished by a remarkable muscular development, which, however, is unhealthy, as it is premature, obtained at the expense of other parts of the body, and of but short duration. The muscles of the arms and the back become very large and full.

With the great muscular development, there is commonly a proportionate diminution of stature. All classes of witnesses state that colliers, as a body—children, young persons, and adults—are stunted in growth. There are only two exceptions to this in Great Britain, namely, Warwickshire and Leicestershire. It is to be inferred from the statements of the sub-commissioner

for Ireland, that that country forms a third exception for the United Kingdom. Of the uniformity of the statements as to the small stature and the stunted growth of the colliers in all other districts, the following may be regarded as examples:—

In Shropshire, the miners, as a body, are of small stature; this is abundantly obvious even to a casual observer, and there are many instances of men never exceeding the size of boys.* Andrew Blake, M. D., states of the colliers in Derbyshire, that he has observed that many of them are not so tall as their neighbours in other employments; this, in a degree, he considers is owing to their being worked so young.† In the West Riding of Yorkshire, also, there is in stature an "appreciable difference in colliers' children, manifest at all ages after they have been three years constantly in the pits; there is little malformation, but, as Mr. Eliss, a surgeon constantly attending them, admits, they are somewhat stunted in growth and expanded in width."‡

"Mr. Henry Hemmingway, surgeon, Dewsbury: 'I am quite sure that the rule is that the children in coal-pits are of a lower stature than others.'—*Symons, Evidence*, No. 221; App. pt. i. p. 282, l. 47.

"Mr. Thomas Rayner, surgeon, Bristall: 'I account for the stunted growth from the stooping position, which makes them grow laterally, and prevents the cartilaginous substances from expanding.'—Ibid. No. 268, p. 292, l. 52.

* Dr. Mitchell, Report, s. 314; App. pt. i. p. 39.

† Fellows, Evidence, No. 10; App. pt. ii. p. 266, l. 10.

‡ Symons, Report, s. 200; App. pt. i. p. 193.

"Henry Moorhouse, surgeon, Huddersfield: 'I may state, from my own personal examination of many of them, that they are much less in stature, in proportion to their ages, than those working in mills.'—Ibid. No. 273, p. 293, l. 49.

"Mr. Jos. Ellison, Bristall: 'The employment of children decidedly stunts their growth.'—Ibid. No. 249, p. 288, l. 8."

Mr. Symons, in Appendix to p. 212 of his Report, has given in detail the names, ages, and measurement, both in stature and in girth of breast, of a great number of farm and of colliery children of both ages respectively. By taking the first ten collier boys, and the first ten farm boys, of ages between twelve and fourteen, we find that the former measured in the aggregate forty-four feet six inches in height, and two hundred and seventy-four and a half inches around the breast; while the farm boys measured forty-seven feet in height, and two hundred and seventy-two inches round the breast. By taking the ten first collier girls and farm girls, respectively between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, we find that the ten collier girls measured forty-six feet four inches in height, and two hundred and ninety-three and a half inches round the breast; while the ten farm girls measured fifty feet five inches in height, and two hundred and ninety-seven inches round the breast; so that in the girls there is a difference in the height of those employed on farms, compared with those employed in collieries, of eight and a half per cent. in favour of the former; while between the colliery and farm boys of a somewhat

younger age, and before any long period had been spent in the collieries, the difference appears to be five and a half per cent. in favour of the farm children.

In like manner, of sixty children employed as hurriers in the neighbourhood of Halifax, at the average ages of ten years and nine months, Mr. Scriven states that the average measurement in height was three feet eleven inches and three-tenths, and, in circumference, three feet two inches; while of fifty-one children of the same age employed on farms, the measurement in height was four feet three inches, the circumference being the same in both, namely, two feet three inches. In like manner, of fifty young persons of the average of fourteen years and eleven months, the measurement in height was four feet five inches, and in circumference two feet three inches; while of forty-nine young persons employed on farms, of the average of fifteen years and six months, the measurement in height was four feet ten inches and eight-elevenths, and, in circumference, two feet three inches, being a difference of nearly six inches in height in favour of the agricultural labourers.

In the district of Bradford and Leeds, there is "in stature an appreciable difference, from about the age at which children begin to work, between children employed in mines and children of the same age and station in the neighbourhood not so employed; and this

shortness of stature is generally, though to a less degree, visible in the adult."*

In Lancashire, the sub-commissioner reports that—"It appeared to him that the average of the colliers are considerably shorter in stature than the agricultural labourers."† The evidence collected by the other gentlemen in this district is to the same effect. Mr. Pearson, surgeon to the dispensary, Wigan, states, with regard to the physical condition of the children and young persons employed in coal-mining, as compared with that of children in other employments, that they are smaller and have a stunted appearance, which he attributes to their being employed too early in life.‡ And Mr. Richard Ashton, relieving-officer of the Blackburn district, describes the colliers as "a low race, and their appearance is rather decrepit."§ Though some remarkable exceptions have been seen in the counties of Warwick and Leicester, the colliers, as a race of men, in some districts, and in Durham among the rest, are not of large stature.‖ George Canney, medical

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* Wood, Report, s. 86; App. pt. ii. p. H 7. Also Evidence, Nos. 60, 75, 76.

† Kennedy, Report, s. 296; App. pt. ii. p. 188.

‡ Ibid. s. 304; p. 188.

§ Austin, Evidence, No. 1; App. pt. ii. p. 811; i. 12. See also the remarks by Mr. Fletcher on the vicinity of Oldham, App. pt. ii. s. 59, p. 832.

‖ Mitchell, Report, s. 214; App. pt. i. p. 143.

practitioner, Bishop Aukland, states, "that they are less in weight and bulk than the generality of men."*

Of the collier boys of Durham and Northumberland, the sub-commissioner reports that an inspection of more than a thousand of these boys convinced him that "as a class, (with many individual exceptions,) their stature must be considered as diminutive."† Mr. Nicholas Wood, viewer of Killingworth, &c., states "that there is a very general diminution of stature among pit-men."‡ Mr. Heath, of Newcastle, surgeon to Killingworth, Gosforth, and Coxlodge collieries, "thinks the confinement of children for twelve hours in a pit is not consistent with ordinary health; the stature is rather diminished, and there is an absence of colour; they are shortened in stature."§ And J. Brown, M. D., Sunderland, states "that they are generally stunted in stature, thin and swarthy."‖

Of the collier population in Cumberland, it is stated that "they are in appearance quite as stunted in growth, and present much the same physical phenomena as those of Yorkshire, comparing, of course, those following similar branches of the work."¶ Thomas

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* Mitchell, Evidence, No. 97; App. pt. i. p. 154, l. 19.

† Leifchild, Report, s. 72; App. pt. i. p. 252.

‡ Leifchild, Evidence, No. 97; App. pt. i. p. 587, l. 39.

§ Ibid. No. 497, p. 665, l. 7.

‖ Ibid. No. 504, p. 672, l. 22.

¶ Symons, Report, s. 22; App. pt. i. p. 802.

Mitchell, surgeon, Whitehaven, says, "their stature is partly decreased."*

Of the deteriorated physical condition of the collier population in the East of Scotland, as shown, among other indications, by diminished stature, Dr. S. Scott Alison states that "many of the infants in a collier community are thin, skinny, and wasted, and indicate, by their contracted features and sickly, dirty-white or faint-yellowish aspect, their early participation in a deteriorated physical condition. From the age of infancy up to the seventh or eighth year, much sickliness and general imperfection of physical development is observable. The physical condition of the boys and girls engaged in the collieries is much inferior to that of children of the same age engaged in farming operations, in most other trades, or who remain at home unemployed. The children are, upon the whole, prejudicially affected to a material extent in their growth and development. Many of them are short for their years."†

In South Wales, "the testimony of medical gentlemen, and of managers and overseers of various works, in which large numbers of children as well as adults are employed, proves that the physical health and strength of children and young persons is deteriorated by their employment at the early ages and in the works

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* Symons, Evidence, No. 312; App. pt. i. p. 805, l. 59.

† Franks, Report, App. A, No. 2; App. pt. i. p. 410, 411.

before enumerated."* Mr. Jonathan Isaacs, agent of the Top Hill colliery:—"I have noticed that the children of miners, who are sent to work, do not grow as they ought to do; they get pale in their looks, are weak in their limbs, and any one can distinguish a collier's child from the children of other working people."† Mr. P. Kirkhouse, oversman to the Cyfarthfa collieries and ironstone mines, on this point observes—"The infantine ages at which children are employed cranks (stunts) their growth, and injures their constitution."‡ John Russell, surgeon to the Dowlais Iron Works:—"In stature, I believe a difference to exist in the male youth from twelve to sixteen, employed in the mines and collieries, compared with those engaged in other works, the former being somewhat stunted; and this difference (under some form or other) seems still perceptible in the adult miners and colliers."§

A crippled gait, often connected with positive deformity, is one of the frequent results of slaving in the mines.

In Derbyshire, the children who have worked in the collieries from a very early age are stated to be bow-legged.‖

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* Franks, Report, s. 85; App. pt. ii. p. 485.

† Franks, Evidence, No. 144; App. pt. ii. p. 582, l. 4.

‡ Ibid. No. 2, p. 503, l. 21.

§ R. W. Jones, Evidence, No. 102; App. pt. ii. p. 64, l. 28.

‖ Fellows, Report, s. 45; App. pt. ii. p. 255.

In the West Riding of Yorkshire, "after they are turned forty-five or fifty, they walk home from their work almost like cripples; stiffly stalking along, often leaning on sticks, bearing the visible evidences in their frame and gait of over-strained muscles and over-taxed strength. Where the lowness of the gates induces a very bent posture, I have observed an inward curvature of the spine; and chicken-breasted children are very common among those who work in low, thin coal-mines."* Mr. Uriah Bradbury, surgeon, Mirfield:—"Their knees never stand straight, like other people's."† Mr. Henry Hemmingway, surgeon, Dewsbury:—"May be distinguished among crowds of people, by the bending of the spinal column."‡ Mr. William Sharp, surgeon, Bradford:—"There are occasionally cases of deformity."§

In Lancashire district, John Bagley, about thirty-nine years of age, collier, Mrs. Lancaster's, Patricroft, states, that "the women drawing in the pits are generally crooked. Can tell any woman who has been in the pits. They are rarely, if ever, so straight as other women who stop above ground."‖ Mr. William Gaulter, surgeon, of Over Darwen, says—"Has practised as a

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* Symons, Report, s. 110; App. pt. i. p. 181.

† Symons, Evidence, No. 199; App. pt. i. p. 279, l. 3.

‡ Ibid. No. 21; p. 282, l. 246.

§ Wood, Evidence, No. 60; App. pt. ii. p. *h* 27, l. 46.

‖ Kennedy, Evidence, No. 30; App. pt. ii. p. 218, l. 6.

surgeon twenty-four years in this neighbourhood. Those who work in collieries at an early age, when they arrive at maturity are not generally so robust as those who work elsewhere. They are frequently crooked, (not distorted,) bow-legged, and stooping."* Betty Duxberry, whose children work in the pits, asserts that "colliers are all crooked and short-legged, not like other men who work above ground; but they were always colliers, and always will be. This young boy turns his feet out and his knees together; drawing puts them out of shape."†

Evidence collected in Durham and Northumberland, shows that the underground labour produces similar effects in that district.

Mr. Nicholas Wood, viewer of Killingworth, Hetton, and other collieries:—"The children are perhaps a little ill-formed, and the majority of them pale, and not robust. Men working in low seams are bent double and bow-legged very often."‡ J. Brown, M. D. and J. P., Sunderland:—"They labour more frequently than other classes of the community under deformity of the lower limbs, especially that variety of it described as being 'in-kneed.' This I should ascribe to yielding of the ligaments, owing to long standing in the

* Austin, Evidence, No. 7; App. pt. ii. p. 812. 1, 160.
† Ibid. No. 17; p. 815, 1. 58.
‡ Leifchild, Evidence, No. 97; App. pt. i. p. 587, 1. 32.

mines in a constrained and awkward position."* Mr. Thomas Greenshaw, surgeon, Walker colliery:—"Their persons are apt to be somewhat curved and cramped. As they advance in life, their knees and back frequently exhibit a curved appearance, from constant bending at their work."† Mr. W. Morrison, surgeon of Pelaw House, Chesterle street, Countess of Durham's collieries:—"The 'outward man' distinguishes a pit-man from any other operative. His stature is diminished, his figure disproportionate and misshapen; his legs being much bowed; his chest protruding, (the thoracic region being unequally developed.) His countenance is not less striking than his figure—his cheeks being generally hollow, his brow overhanging, his cheek-bones high, his forehead low and retreating. Nor is his appearance healthful—his habit is tainted with scrofula. I have seen agricultural labourers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and even those among the wan and distressed-looking weavers of Nottinghamshire, to whom the term 'jolly' might not be inaptly applied; but I never saw a 'jolly-looking' pit-man. As the germ of this physical degeneration may be formed in the youthful days of the pit-man, it is desirable to look for its cause."‡

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* Leichfield, Evidence, No. 504; p. 672, l. 22.

† Ibid. No. 498; p. 665, l. 50.

‡ Ibid. No. 496; p. 662, l. 62.

Ruptures, rheumatism, diseases of the heart and of other organs, the results of over-exertion in unhealthy places, are common among the persons employed in the mines, as many intelligent persons testified before the commissioners.

An employment often pursued under circumstances which bring with them so many and such formidable diseases, must prematurely exhaust the strength of ordinary constitutions; and the evidence collected in almost all the districts proves that too often the collier is a disabled man, with the marks of old age upon him, while other men have scarcely passed beyond their prime.

The evidence shows that in South Staffordshire and Shropshire, many colliers are incapable of following their occupation after they are forty years of age; others continue their work up to fifty, which is stated by several witnesses to be about the general average. Mr. Marcy, clerk to the Wellington Union, Salop, states, that "at about forty the greater part of the colliers may be considered as disabled, and regular old men—as much as some are at eighty."*

Even in Warwickshire and Leicestershire, in which their physical condition is better than in any other districts, Mr. Michael Parker, ground bailiff of the Smithson collieries, states that "some of the men are

* Mitchell, Evidence, No. 46; App. pt. i. p. 81, l. 47.

knocked up at forty-five and fifty, and that fifty may be the average; which early exhaustion of the physical strength he attributes to the severe labour and bad air."* Mr. Dalby, surgeon of the Union of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, says—"The work in the pit is very laborious, and some are unable for it as early as fifty, others at forty-five, and some at sixty; I should say the greater part at forty-five."† And Mr. Davenport, clerk of the Union of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, gives a higher average, and says that "a collier may wear from sixty-five to seventy, while an agricultural labourer may wear from seventy to seventy-five."‡

Of Derbyshire the sub-commissioner reports—"I have not perceived that look of premature old age so general amongst colliers, *until they are forty years of age*, excepting in the loaders, who evidently appear so at *twenty-eight or thirty*, and this I think must arise from the hardness of their labour, in having such great weights to lift, and breathing a worse atmosphere than any other in the pit."§ Phœbe Gilbert states—"The loaders are, as the saying is, 'old men before they are young ones.'"‖ Dr. Blake says—"He has also noticed that when a collier has worked from a child,

* Mitchell, Evidence, No. 77; p. 113, l. 6.
† Ibid. No. 81; p. 114, l. 22.
‡ Ibid. No. 82; p. 114, l. 61.
§ Fellows, Report, s. 49; App. pt. ii. p. 256.
‖ Fellows, Evidence, No. 105; p. 292, l. 48.

and becomes forty, he looks much older than those of the same age above ground."*

In Yorkshire "the collier of fifty is usually an aged man; he looks overstrained and stiffened by labour."† "But whilst both the child and the adult miner appear to enjoy excellent health, and to be remarkably free from disease, it nevertheless appears that their labour, at least that of the adult miner, is, in its general result, and in the extent to which it is pursued, of a character more severe than the constitution is properly able to bear. It is rare that a collier is able to follow his calling beyond the age of from forty to fifty, and then, unless he be fortunate enough to obtain some easier occupation, he sinks into a state of helpless dependence. Better habits with regard to temperance might diminish, but would not remove, this evil; and the existence of this fact, in despite of the general healthiness of the collier population, gives rise to the question whether, apart from all considerations of mental and moral improvement, a fatal mistake is not committed in employing children of tender years to the extent that their strength will bear, instead of giving opportunity, by short hours of labour, for the fuller and more perfect physical development which would

* Fellows, Evidence, No. 10; p. 262, l. 8.

† Symons, Report, s. 209; App. pt. i. p. 198.

better fit them to go through the severe labour of their after-life."*

In the coal-fields of North Durham and Northumberland, Dr. Elliott states "that premature old age in appearance is common; men of thirty-five or forty years may often be taken for ten years older than they really are."† Mr. Thomas Greenhow, surgeon, Walker Colliery, North Durham, says "they have an aged aspect somewhat early in life."‡ Of the effect of employment in the coal-mines of the East of Scotland, in producing an early and irreparable deterioration of the physical condition, the sub-commissioner thus reports: "In a state of society such as has been described, the condition of the children may be easily imagined, and its baneful influence on the health cannot well be exaggerated; and I am informed by very competent authorities, that six months labour in the mines is sufficient to effect a very visible change in the physical condition of the children; and indeed it is scarcely possible to conceive of circumstances more calculated to sow the seeds of future disease, and, to borrow the language of the Instructions, to prevent the organs from being fully developed, to enfeeble and disorder their functions, and to subject the whole system to injury which cannot be repaired at any subsequent stage of

* Wood, Report, s. 42; App. pt. ii. p. 167.

† Leifchild, Evidence, No. 499; App. pt. i. p. 668, l. 44.

‡ Ibid. No. 498; p. 665, l. 52.

life."* In the West of Scotland, Dr. Thompson, Ayr, says—"A collier at fifty generally has the appearance of a man ten years older than he is."†

The sub-committee for North Wales reports—"They fail in health and strength early in life. At thirty a miner begins to look wan and emaciated, and so does a collier at forty; while the farming labourer continues robust and hearty."‡ John Jones, relieving officer for the Holywell district, states—"Though the children and young persons employed in these works are healthy, still it is observable that they soon get to look old, and they often become asthmatic before they are forty."§

In the Forest of Dean, Mr. Thomas Marsh, surgeon, states that "colliers usually become old men at fifty to fifty-five years of age."‖ In North Somersetshire, William Brice, clerk and manager, says "there are very few at work who are above fifty years of age."¶

Early death is the natural consequence of the premature decrepitude thus described to those whom ever-imminent casualities have not brought to the grave during the years of their vigour. The medical evidence shows that even in South Staffordshire and Shropshire,

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* Franks, Report, s. 68; App. pt. i. p. 896.
† Tancred, Evidence, No. 84; App. pt. i. p. 871, l. 58.
‡ H. H. Jones, Report, s. 83; App. pt. ii. p. 875.
§ H. H. Jones, Evidence, No. 96; App. pt. ii. p. 407, l. 51.
‖ Waring, Evidence, No. 88; App. pt. ii. p. 25, l. 57.
¶ Stewart, Evidence, No. 7; App. pt. ii. p. 50, l. 48.

comparatively few miners attain their fifty-first year. In Warwickshire and Leicestershire it is not uncommon for the men to follow their occupation ten years longer; but all classes of witnesses in the other districts uniformly state that it is rare to see an old collier.

In Derbyshire, William Wardle "does not think colliers live as long as those above ground; very few live to be sixty."*

In Yorkshire, "colliers have harder work than any other class of workmen, and the length of time they work, as well as the intense exertion they undergo, added to the frequent unhealthiness of the atmosphere, decidedly tend to shorten their lives."† Mr. Henry Hemmingway, surgeon, Dewsbury, states—"I only knew one old collier."‡ Mr. Thomas Rayner, surgeon, Bristall, says—"I have had twenty-seven years' practice, and I know of no old colliers—their extreme term of life is from fifty-six to sixty years of age."§ In Lancashire, states Mr. Kennedy, "it appeared to me that the number of aged men was much smaller than in other occupations."‖

After stating that the colliers of South Durham are a strong and healthy race, Dr. Mitchell adds—"The

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* Fellows, Evidence, No. 84; App. pt. ii. p. 287, l. 38.
† Symons, Report, s. 110, App. pt. i. p. 181.
‡ Symons, Evidence, No. 221; App. pt. i. p. 282, l. 45.
§ Ibid. No. 268; p. 292, l. 51.
‖ Kennedy, Report, s. 299; App. pt. ii. p. 188.

work, however, is laborious and exhausting; and the colliers, though healthy, are not long-lived."* John Wetherell Hays, clerk of the Union, Durham, states, "that the colliers are not long-lived; that they live well, and live fast."† And George Canney, medical practitioner, Bishop Auckland, says "they are generally short-lived."‡

The sub-commissioner for the East of Scotland reports, that after a careful consideration of all the sources of information which could assist him in the object of his inquiry, he arrives at the following conclusion:—"That the labour in the coal-mines in the Lothian and River Forth districts of Scotland is most severe, and that its severity is in many cases increased by the want of proper attention to the economy of mining operations; whence those operations, as at present carried on, are extremely unwholesome, and productive of diseases which have a manifest tendency to shorten life."§ Mr. Walter Jarvie, manager to Mr. Cadell, of Banton, states that "in the small village of Banton there are nearly forty widows; and as the children work always on parents' behalf, it prevents them having recourse to the kirk-session for relief."‖ Elsper Thompson says,

* Mitchell, Report, s. 212; App. pt. i. p. 143.
† Mitchell, Evidence, No. 96; App. pt. i. p. 153, l. 57.
‡ Ibid. No. 97; p. 153, l. 64.
§ Franks, Report, s. 121; App. pt. i. p. 408.
‖ Franks, Evidence, No. 278; App. pt. i. p. 487, l. 25.

"Most of the men begin to complain at thirty to thirty-five years of age, and drop off before they get the length of forty."* Henry Naysmith, sixty-five years of age, collier, who says he has wrought upward of fifty years, adds that "he has been off work nearly ten years, and is much afflicted with shortness of breath: it is the bane of the colliers, and few men live to my age."†

In North Wales, it is said that "few colliers come to the age of sixty, and but still fewer miners. This I believe to be the fact, though I met with many, both miners and colliers, who had attained the age of sixty; yet they were few compared with the number *employed* in these branches of industry."‡ Mr. John Jones, relieving-officer for the Holywell district, "thinks they are not as long-lived as agriculturists."§ James Jones, overman, Cyfarthfa Works, states "that the colliers are generally very healthy and strong up to the age of forty or fifty; they then often have a difficulty of breathing, and they die at younger ages than agricultural labourers or handicraftsmen."‖ Mr. John Hughes, assistant underground agent, says "they do not appear to live long after fifty or sixty years old."¶

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* Franks, Evidence, No. 73; p. 450, l. 31.
† Ibid. No. 83; p. 452, l. 29.
‡ H. H. Jones, Report, s. 84; App. pt. ii. p. 375.
§ H. H. Jones, Evidence, No. 96; App. pt. ii. p. 407, l. 53.
‖ Ibid. No. 2; p. 378, l. 35. ¶ Ibid. No. 3; p. 379, l. 34.

In South Wales, the sub-commissioner reports that he "has not been able to ascertain, for want of sufficient data, the average duration of a collier's life in the counties either of Glamorgan or Monmouth, but it is admitted that such average duration is less than that of a common labourer. In the county of Pembroke, however, Mr. James Bowen, surgeon, Narbeth, in that county, informs me—"The average life of a collier is about forty; they rarely attain forty-five years of age; and in the entire population of Begelly and East Williamson, being 1163, forming, strictly speaking, a mining population, there are not six colliers of sixty years of age."

The Rev. Richard Buckby, rector of Begelly, in answer to one of the queries in the Educational Paper of the Central Board, writes—"The foul air of the mines seriously affects the lungs of the children and young persons employed therein, and shortens the term of life. In a population of one thousand, there are not six colliers sixty years of age."

There are certain minor evils connected with employment in the worst class of coal-mines, which, though not perhaps very serious, are nevertheless sources of much suffering, such as irritation of the head, feet, back, and skin, together with occasional strains. "The upper parts of their head are always denuded of hair; their scalps are also thickened and inflamed, sometimes taking on the appearance *tinea capitis*, from the press-

ure and friction which they undergo in the act of pushing the corves forward, although they are mostly defended by a padded cap."* "It is no uncommon thing to see the hurriers bald, owing to pushing the corves up steep board gates, with their heads."†

Mr. Alexander Muir, surgeon: "Are there any peculiar diseases to which colliers are subject? No, excepting that the hurriers are occasionally affected by a formation of matter upon the forehead, in consequence of pushing the wagons with their head. To what extent is such formation of matter injurious to the general health? It produces considerable local irritation. When the matter is allowed to escape, it heals as perfectly as before. Do you conceive this use of the head to be a necessary or unnecessary part of their occupation? I should think it not necessary. Does it arise from any deficiency of strength, the head being used to supply the place of the arms? I should think it does."‡ David Swallow, collier, East Moor: "The hair is very often worn off bald, and the part is swollen so that sometimes it is like a bulb filled with spongy matter; so very bad after they have done their day's work that they cannot bear it touching."§ William Holt: "Some thrutched with their heads, because

* Scriven, Report, s. 83; App. pt. ii. p. 72.
† Symons, Evidence, s. 96; App. pt. i. p. 187.
‡ Wood, Evidence, No. 76; App. pt. ii. p. A 82, l. 18.
§ Symons, Evidence, No. 197; App. pt. i. p. 277, l. 68.

they cannot thrutch enough with their hands alone. Thrutching with their heads makes a gathering in the head, and makes them very ill."*

In running continually over uneven ground, without shoes or stockings, particles of dirt, coal, and stone get between the toes, and are prolific sources of irritation and lameness, of which they often complain; the skin covering the balls of the toes and heels becomes thickened and horny, occasioning a good deal of pain and pustular gathering."† James Mitchell: "I have hurt my feet often; sometimes the coals cut them, and they run matter, and the corves run over them when I stand agate; I an't not always aware of their coming."‡ Selina Ambler: "I many times hurt my feet and legs with the coals and scale in gate; sometimes we run corve over them; my feet have many a time been blooded."§ Mrs. Carr: "Has known many foals laid off with sore backs, especially last year and the year before, when the putting was said to be very heavy in the Flatworth pit. Some foals had to lay off a day or two, to get their backs healed, before they could go to work again."‖ William Jakes: "His back is often skinned; is now sore and all red, from holding on or

* Austin, Evidence, No. 9; App. pt. ii. p. 813, l. 40.
† Scriven, Report, s. 82; App. pt. ii. p. 72.
‡ Scriven, Evidence, No. 2; App. pt. ii. p. 101, l. 33.
§ Ibid. No. 79, p. 124, l. 28. See also Nos. 12, 13, 18, 25.
‖ Leifchild, Evidence, No. 86; App. pt. i. p. 583, l. 27.

back against the corf."* George Faction: "In some places he bends quite double, and rubs his back so as to bring the skin off, and whiles to make it bleed, and whiles he is off work from these things."† Mr. James Probert, surgeon: "Chronic pain in the back is a very common complaint among colliers, arising from overstrained tendonous muscles, and it is the source of much discomfort to the colliers."‡ Mr. William Dodd, surgeon: "As to the 'boils,' when a fresh man comes to the colliery he generally becomes affected by these 'boils,' most probably from the heat in the first instance, and subsequently they are aggravated by the salt water."§ James Johnson: "Sometimes when among the salt water, the heat, etc., brings out boils about the size of a hen's egg upon him, about his legs and thighs, and under his arms sometimes. A vast of boys, men, and all, have these boils at times. These boils perhaps last a fortnight before they get ripe, and then they burst. A great white thing follows, and is called a 'tanner'"‖ Dr. Adams, Glasgow: "An eruption on the skin is very prevalent among colliers."¶ William Mackenzie: "Had about twenty boils on his back at

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* Leifchild, Evidence, No. 201; p. 610, 1. 52.

† Ibid. No. 267, p. 623, 1. 11.

‡ Franks, Evidence, No. 31; App. pt. ii. p. 510, 1. 49.

§ Leifchild, Evidence, No. 385; App. pt. i. p. 645, 1. 35.

‖ Ibid. No. 375, p. 644, 1. 48.

¶ Tancred, Evidence, No. 9; App. pt. i. p. 861, 1. 45.

one time, about two years since. These lasted about three months. He was kept off work about a week. If he touched them against any thing they were like death to him. But few of the boys have so many at a time; many of the boys get two or three at a time. The boys take physic to bring them all out; then they get rid of them for some time. If the salt water falls on any part of them that is scotched, it burns into the flesh like; it is like red rust. It almost blinds the boys if it gets into their eyes."*

Accidents of a fatal nature are of frightful frequency in the mines. In one year there were three hundred and forty-nine deaths by violence in the coal-mines of England alone. Of the persons thus killed, fifty-eight were under thirteen years of age; sixty-two under eighteen, and the remainder over eighteen. One of the most frequent causes of accidents is the want of superintendence to see the security of the machinery for letting down and bringing up the work-people, and the restriction of the number of persons who ascend or descend at the same time. The commissioners observed at Elland two hurriers, named Ann Ambler and William Dyson, cross-lapped upon a clutch-iron, drawn up by a woman. As soon as they arrived at the top the handle was made fast by a bolt. The

* Leifchild, Evidence, No. 376; App. pt. i. p. 644, l. 54.

woman then grasped a hand of both at the same time, and by main force brought them to land.

From all the evidence adduced, the commissioners came to the following conclusions:—

"In regard to coal-mines—

"That instances occur in which children are taken into these mines to work as early as four years of age, sometimes at five, and between five and six; not unfrequently between six and seven, and often from seven to eight; while from eight to nine is the ordinary age at which employment in these mines commences.

"That a very large proportion of the persons employed in carrying on the work of these mines is under thirteen years of age; and a still larger proportion between thirteen and eighteen.

"That in several districts female children begin to work in these mines at the same early ages as the males.

"That the great body of the children and young persons employed in these mines are of the families of the adult work-people engaged in the pits, or belong to the poorest population in the neighbourhood, and are hired and paid in some districts by the work-people, but in others by the proprietors or contractors.

"That there are in some districts, also, a small number of parish apprentices, who are bound to serve their masters until twenty-one years of age, in an employment in which there is nothing deserving the name of skill to be acquired, under circumstances of frequent ill-treatment, and under the oppressive condition that they shall receive only food and clothing, while their free companions may be obtaining a man's wages.

"That, in many instances, much that skill and capital can effect to render the place of work unoppressive and healthy and safe, is done, often with complete success, as far as regards the healthfulness and comfort of the mines; but that to render them perfectly safe does not appear to be practicable by any means yet known; while, in great numbers of instances, their condition in regard both to ventilation and drainage is lamentably defective.

"That the nature of the employment which is assigned to the youngest children—generally that of 'trapping'—requires that they should be in the pit as soon as the work of the day commences, and, according to the present system, that they should not leave the pit before the work of the day is at an end.

"That although this employment scarcely deserves the name of labour, yet, as the children engaged in it are commonly excluded from light, and are always without companions, it would, were it not for the passing and repassing of the coal-carriages, amount to solitary confinement of the worst sort.

"That in those districts where the seams of coal are so thick that horses go direct to the workings, or in which the side passages from the workings to the horseways are not of any great length, the lights in the main way render the situation of the children comparatively less cheerless, dull, and stupefying; but that in some districts they are in solitude and darkness during the whole time they are in the pit; and, according to their own account, many of them never see the light of day for weeks together during the greater part of the winter season, except on those days in the week when work is not going on, and on the Sundays.

"That, at different ages from six years old and upward, the hard work of pushing and dragging the carriages of coal from the workings to the main ways, or to the foot of the shaft, begins; a labour which all classes of witnesses concur in stating requires the unremitting exertion of all the physical power which the young workers possess.

"That, in the districts in which females are taken down into the coal-mines, both sexes are employed together in precisely the same kind of labour, and work for the same number of hours; that the girls and boys, and the young men and young women, and even married women and women with child, commonly work almost naked, and the men, in many mines, quite naked; and that all classes of witnesses bear testimony to the demoralizing influence of the employment of females under ground.

"That, in the East of Scotland, a much larger proportion of children and young persons are employed in these mines than in

any other districts, many of whom are girls; and that the chief part of their labour consists in carrying the coal on their backs up steep ladders.

"That, when the work-people are in full employment, the regular hours of work for children and young persons are rarely less than eleven, more often they are twelve; in some districts they are thirteen, and in one district they are generally fourteen and upward.

"That, in the great majority of these mines, night-work is a part of the ordinary system of labour, more or less regularly carried on according to the demand for coals, and one which the whole body of evidence shows to act most injuriously both on the physical and moral condition of the work-people, and more especially on that of the children and young persons.

"That the labour performed daily for this number of hours, though it cannot strictly be said to be continuous, because, from the nature of the employment, intervals of a few minutes necessarily occur during which the muscles are not in active exertion, is, nevertheless, generally uninterrupted by any regular time set apart for rest or refreshment; what food is taken in the pit being eaten as best it may while the labour continues.

"That in all well-regulated mines, in which in general the hours of work are the shortest, and in some few of which from half an hour to an hour is regularly set apart for meals, little or no fatigue is complained of after an ordinary day's work, when the children are ten years old and upward; but in other instances great complaint is made of the feeling of fatigue, and the work-people are never without this feeling, often in an extremely painful degree.

"That in many cases the children and young persons have little cause of complaint in regard to the treatment they receive from the persons of authority in the mine, or from the colliers; but that in general the younger children are roughly used by their older companions, while in many mines the conduct of the adult colliers to the children and adult persons who assist them is harsh and cruel; the persons in authority in these mines, who must be cognizant of this ill-usage, never interfering to prevent

it, and some of them distinctly stating that they do not conceive that they have any right to do so.

"That, with some exceptions, little interest is taken by the coal-owners in the children or young persons employed in their works after the daily labour is over; at least, little is done to afford them the means of enjoying innocent amusement and healthful recreation.

"That in all the coal fields accidents of a fearful nature are extremely frequent; and that the returns made to our own queries, as well as the registry tables, prove that, of the work-people who perish by such accidents, the proportion of children and young persons sometimes equals and rarely falls much below that of adults.

"That one of the most frequent causes of accidents in these mines is the want of superintendence by overlookers or otherwise, to see to the security of the machinery for letting down and bringing up the work-people, the restriction of the number of persons that ascend and descend at a time, the state of the mine as to the quantity of noxious gas in it, the efficiency of the ventilation, the exactness with which the air-door keepers perform their duty, the places into which it is safe or unsafe to go with a naked lighted candle, the security of the proppings to uphold the roof, &c.

"That another frequent cause of fatal accidents is the almost universal practice of intrusting the closing of the air-doors to very young children.

"That there are many mines in which the most ordinary precautions to guard against accidents are neglected, and in which no money appears to be expended with a view to secure the safety, much less the comfort, of the work-people.

"There are, moreover, two practices, peculiar to a few districts, which deserve the highest reprobation, namely,—first, the practice, not unknown in some of the smaller mines in Yorkshire, and common in Lancashire, in employing ropes that are unsafe for letting down and drawing up the work-people; and second, the practice occasionally met with in Yorkshire, and common in Derbyshire and Lancashire, of employing boys at the steam-engines for letting down and drawing up the work-people."—*First Report, Conclusions*, p. 255–257.

Well, what did the British Government do when the heart-rending report of the commissioners was received? It felt the necessity of a show of legislative interference. Lord Ashley introduced a bill into the House of Commons, having for its object the amelioration of the condition of the mining women and children. Much discussion occurred. The bill passed the House of Commons, and was taken to the House of Lords, the high court of British oppression. Some lords advocated the measure, whereupon Lord Londonderry and some others spoke of them as "bitten with a humanity mania." Modifications were made in the bill to suit the pockets of the luxurious proprietors, and then it was grumblingly adopted. What did the bill provide? That no child under *ten* years of age, and no woman or girl, of any age, should be allowed to work in a mine. Now, children may be ten years of age, and above that, and yet they are still tender little creatures. The majority of the sufferers who came to the notice of the commissioners were above ten years of age! In that point, at least, the bill was worse than a nullity—it was a base deceit, pouring balm, but not upon the wound!

The same bill provided that no females should be allowed to work in the mines. But then the females were driven to the mines by the dread of starvation. Soon after the passage of the bill, petitions from the mining districts were sent to Parliament, praying that females might be allowed to work in the mines. The

petitioners had no means of getting bread. If they had, they would never have been in the mines at all. The horrors of labour in the mines were consequences of the general slavery. Well, there were many proprietors of mines in Parliament, and their influence was sufficient to nullify the law in practice. There is good authority for believing that the disgusting slavery of the British mines has been ameliorated only to a very limited extent.

## CHAPTER III.

### SLAVERY IN THE BRITISH FACTORIES.

GREAT BRITAIN has long gloried in the variety and importance of her manufactures. Burke spoke of Birmingham as the toyshop of Europe; and, at this day, the looms of Manchester and the other factory towns of England furnish the dry-goods of a large portion of the world. Viewed at a distance, this wonder-working industry excites astonishment and admiration; but a closer inspection will show us such corrupt and gloomy features in this vast manufacturing system as will turn a portion of admiration into shrinking disgust. Giving the meed of praise to the perfection of machinery and the excellence of the fabrics, what shall we say of the human operatives? For glory purchased at the price of blood and souls is a vanity indeed. Let us see!

The number of persons employed in the cotton, wool, silk, and flax manufactures of Great Britain is estimated at about two millions. Mr. Baines states that about one and a half million are employed in the cotton manufactures alone. The whole number employed in the production of all sorts of iron, hardware, and cutlery

articles is estimated at 350,000. In the manufacture of jewelry, earthen and glass ware, paper, woollen stuffs, distilled and fermented liquors, and in the common trades of tailoring, shoemaking, carpentering, &c., the numbers employed are very great, though not accurately known. We think the facts will bear us out in stating that this vast body of operatives suffer more of the real miseries of slavery than any similar class upon the face of the earth.

In the first place, admitting that wages are as high in Great Britain as in any continental country, the enormous expenses of the church and aristocracy produce a taxation which eats up so large a portion of these wages, that there is not enough left to enable the workman to live decently and comfortably. But the wages are, in general, brought very low by excessive competition; and, in consequence, the operative must stretch his hours of toil far beyond all healthy limits to earn enough to pay taxes and support himself. It is the struggle of drowning men, and what wonder if many sink beneath the gloomy waves?

When C. Edwards Lester, an author of reputation, was in England, he visited Manchester, and, making inquiries of an operative, obtained the following reply:—

"I have a wife and nine children, and a pretty hard time we have too, we are so many; and most of the children are so small, they can do little for the support of the family. I generally get from two shillings to a crown a day for carrying luggage; and some of my children are in the mills; and the rest are too young

to work yet. My wife is never well, and it comes pretty hard on her to do the work of the whole family. We often talk these things over, and feel pretty sad. We live in a poor house; we can't clothe our children comfortably; not one of them ever went to school: they could go to the Sunday-school, but we can't make them look decent enough to go to such a place. As for meat, we never taste it; potatoes and coarse bread are our principal food. We can't save any thing for a day of want; almost every thing we get for our work seems to go for taxes. We are taxed for something almost every week in the year. We have no time to ourselves when we are free from work. It seems that our life is all toil; I sometimes almost give up. Life isn't worth much to a poor man in England; and sometimes Mary and I, when we talk about it, pretty much conclude that we all should be better off if we were dead. I have gone home at night a great many times, and told my wife when she said supper was ready, that I had taken a bite at a chophouse on the way, and was not hungry—she and the children could eat my share. Yes, I have said this a great many times when I felt pretty hungry myself. I sometimes wonder that God suffers so many poor people to come into the world."

And this is, comparatively, a mild case. Instances of hard-working families living in dark, damp cellars, and having the coarsest food, are common in Manchester, Birmingham, and other manufacturing towns.

Mrs. Gaskell, in her thrilling novel, "Mary Barton, a Tale of Manchester Life," depicts without exaggeration the sufferings of the operatives and their families when work is a little slack, or when, by accident, they are thrown out of employment for a short period. A large factory, belonging to a Mr. Carson, had been destroyed by fire, and about the same time, as trade was bad, some mills shortened hours, turned off hands,

and finally stopped work altogether. Almost inconceivable misery followed among the unemployed workmen. In the best of times they fared hardly; now they were forced to live in damp and filthy cellars, and many perished, either from starvation or from fevers bred in their horrible residences. One cold evening John Barton received a hurried visit from a fellow-operative, named George Wilson.

"'You've not got a bit o' money by you, Barton?' asked he.

"'Not I; who has now, I'd like to know? Whatten you want it for?'

"'I donnot want it for mysel, tho' we've none to spare. But don ye know Ben Davenport as worked at Carson's? He's down wi' the fever, and ne'er a stick o' fire, nor a cowd potato in the house.'

"'I han got no money, I tell ye,' said Barton. Wilson looked disappointed. Barton tried not to be interested, but he could not help it in spite of his gruffness. He rose, and went to the cupboard, (his wife's pride long ago.) There lay the remains of his dinner, hastily put there ready for supper. Bread, and a slice of cold, fat, boiled bacon. He wrapped them in his handkerchief, put them in the crown of his hat, and said—'Come, let's be going.'

"'Going—art thou going to work this time o' day?'

"'No, stupid, to be sure not. Going to see the fellow thou spoke on.' So they put on their hats and set out. On the way Wilson said Davenport was a good fellow, though too much of the Methodee; that his children were too young to work, but not too young to be cold and hungry; that they had sunk lower and lower, and pawned thing after thing, and that now they lived in in a cellar in Berry-street, off Store-street. Barton growled inarticulate words of no benevolent import to a large class of mankind, and so they went along till they arrived in Berry-street. It was unpaved; and down the middle a gutter forced its way, every now and then forming pools in the holes with which the street abounded. Never was the Old Edinburgh cry of 'Gardez l'eau,'

more necessary than in this street. As they passed, women from their doors tossed household slops of *every* description into the gutter; they ran into the next pool, which overflowed and stagnated. Heaps of ashes were the stepping-stones, on which the passer-by, who cared in the least for cleanliness, took care not to put his foot. Our friends were not dainty, but even they picked their way till they got to some steps leading down into a small area, where a person standing would have his head about one foot below the level of the street, and might, at the same time, without the least motion of his body, touch the window of the cellar and the damp, muddy wall right opposite. You went down one step even from the foul area into the cellar, in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window panes were many of them broken and stuffed with rags, which was reason enough for the dusky light that pervaded the place even at midday. After the account I have given of the state of the street, no one can be surprised that, on going into the cellar inhabited by Davenport, the smell was so fetid as almost to knock the two men down. Quickly recovering themselves, as those inured to such things do, they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay, wet, brick floor, through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up; the fireplace was empty and black; the wife sat on her husband's lair, and cried in the dank loneliness.

"'See, missis, I'm back again. Hold your noise, children, and don't mither (trouble) your mammy for bread, here's a chap as has got some for you.'

"In that dim light, which was darkness to strangers, they clustered round Barton, and tore from him the food he had brought with him. It was a large hunch of bread, but it had vanished in an instant.

"'We maun do summut for 'em,' said he to Wilson. 'Yo stop here, and I'll be back in half an hour.'

"So he strode, and ran, and hurried home. He emptied into the ever-useful pocket-handkerchief the little meal remaining in the mug. Mary would have her tea at Miss Simmonds'; her food for the day was safe. Then he went up-stairs for his better coat, and

his one, gay, red and yellow silk pocket-handkerchief—his jewels, his plate, his valuables these were. He went to the pawn-shop; he pawned them for five shillings; he stopped not, nor stayed, till he was once more in London Road, within five minutes' walk of Berry-street—then he loitered in his gait, in order to discover the shops he wanted. He bought meat, and a loaf of bread, candles, chips, and from a little retail yard he purchased a couple of hundredweights of coals. Some money yet remained—all destined for them, but he did not yet know how best to spend it. Food, light, and warmth, he had instantly seen, were necessary; for luxuries he would wait. Wilson's eyes filled with tears when he saw Barton enter with his purchases. He understood it all, and longed to be once more in work, that he might help in some of these material ways, without feeling that he was using his son's money. But though 'silver and gold he had none,' he gave heart-service and love-works of far more value. Nor was John Barton behind in these. 'The fever' was (as it usually is in Manchester) of a low, putrid, typhoid kind; brought on by miserable living, filthy neighbourhood, and great depression of mind and body. It is virulent, malignant, and highly infectious. But the poor are fatalists with regard to infection; and well for them it is so, for in their crowded dwellings no invalid can be isolated. Wilson asked Barton if he thought he should catch it, and was laughed at for his idea.

"The two men, rough, tender nurses as they were, lighted the fire, which smoked and puffed into the room as if it did not know the way up the damp, unused chimney. The very smoke seemed purifying and healthy in the thick clammy air. The children clamoured again for bread; but this time Barton took a piece first to the poor, helpless, hopeless woman, who still sat by the side of her husband, listening to his anxious, miserable mutterings. She took the bread, when it was put into her hand, and broke a bit, but could not eat. She was past hunger. She fell down on the floor with a heavy, unresisting bang. The men looked puzzled. 'She's wellnigh clemmed, (*starved,*)' said Barton. 'Folk do say one mus'n't give clemmed people much to eat; but, bless us, she'll eat naught.'

'I'll tell you what I'll do,' said Wilson, I'll take these two big lads, as does naught but fight, home to my missis's for to-night, and I will get a jug o' tea. Them women always does best with tea and such slop.'

"So Barton was now left alone with a little child, crying, when it had done eating, for mammy, with a fainting, dead-like woman, and with the sick man, whose mutterings were rising up to screams and shrieks of agonized anxiety. He carried the woman to the fire, and chafed her hands. He looked around for something to raise her head. There was literally nothing but some loose bricks: however, those he got, and taking off his coat, he covered them with it as well as he could. He pulled her feet to the fire, which now began to emit some faint heat. He looked round for water, but the poor woman had been too weak to drag herself out to the distant pump, and water there was none. He snatched the child, and ran up the area steps to the room above, and borrowed their only saucepan with some water in it. Then he began, with the useful skill of a working man, to make some gruel; and, when it was hastily made, he seized a battered iron table-spoon, kept when many other little things had been sold in a lot, in order to feed baby, and with it he forced one or two drops between her clenched teeth. The mouth opened mechanically to receive more, and gradually she revived. She sat up and looked round; and, recollecting all, fell down again in weak and passive despair. Her little child crawled to her, and wiped with its fingers the thick-coming tears which she now had strength to weep. It was now high time to attend to the man. He lay on straw, so damp and mouldy no dog would have chosen it in preference to flags; over it was a piece of sacking, coming next to his worn skeleton of a body; above him was mustered every article of clothing that could be spared by mother or children this bitter weather; and, in addition to his own, these might have given as much warmth as one blanket, could they have been kept on him; but as he restlessly tossed to and fro, they fell off, and left him shivering in spite of the burning heat of his skin. Every now and then he started up in his naked madness, looking like the prophet of wo in the fearful plague-picture; but he soon fell again in exhaustion, and

Barton found he must be closely watched, lest in these falls he should injure himself against the hard brick floor. He was thankful when Wilson reappeared, carrying in both hands a jug of steaming tea, intended for the poor wife; but when the delirious husband saw drink, he snatched at it with animal instinct, with a selfishness he had never shown in health.

"Then the two men consulted together. It seemed decided without a word being spoken on the subject, that both should spend the night with the forlorn couple; that was settled. But could no doctor be had? In all probability, no. The next day an infirmary order might be begged; but meanwhile the only medical advice they could have must be from a druggist's. So Barton, being the moneyed man, set out to find a shop in London Road."

"He reached a druggist's shop, and entered. The druggist, whose smooth manners seemed to have been salved over with his own spermaceti, listened attentively to Barton's description of Davenport's illness, concluded it was typhus fever, very prevalent in that neighbourhood, and proceeded to make up a bottle of medicine—sweet spirits of nitre, or some such innocent potion—very good for slight colds, but utterly powerless to stop for an instant the raging fever of the poor man it was intended to relieve. He recommended the same course they had previously determined to adopt, applying the next morning for an infirmary order; and Barton left the shop with comfortable faith in the physic given him; for men of his class, if they believe in physic at all, believe that every description is equally efficacious.

"Meanwhile Wilson had done what he could at Davenport's home. He had soothed and covered the man many a time; he had fed and hushed the little child, and spoken tenderly to the woman, who lay still in her weakness and her weariness. He had opened a door, but only for an instant; it led into a back cellar, with a grating instead of a window, down which dropped the moisture from pigstyes, and worse abominations. It was not paved; the floor was one mass of bad-smelling mud. It had never been used, for there was not an article of furniture in it; nor could a human being, much less a pig, have lived there many days. Yet the 'back apartment' made a difference in the rent.

The Davenports paid threepence more for having two rooms. When he turned round again, he saw the woman suckling the child from her dry, withered breast.

"'Surely the lad is weaned!' exclaimed he, in surprise. 'Why, how old is he?'

"'Going on two year,' she faintly answered. 'But, oh! it keeps him quiet when I've naught else to gi' him, and he'll get a bit of sleep lying there, if he's getten naught beside. We han done our best to gi' the childer food, howe'er we pinched ourselves.'

"'Han ye had no money fra th' town?'

"'No; my master is Buckinghamshire born, and he's feared the town would send him back to his parish, if he went to the board; so we've just borne on in hope o' better times. But I think they'll never come in my day;' and the poor woman began her weak, high-pitched cry again.

"'Here, sup this drop o' gruel, and then try and get a bit o' sleep. John and I'll watch by your master to-night.'

"'God's blessing be on you!'

"She finished the gruel, and fell into a dead sleep. Wilson covered her with his coat as well as he could, and tried to move lightly for fear of disturbing her; but there need have been no such dread, for her sleep was profound and heavy with exhaustion. Once only she roused to pull the coat round her little child.

"And now, all Wilson's care, and Barton's to boot, was wanted to restrain the wild, mad agony of the fevered man. He started up, he yelled, he seemed infuriated by overwhelming anxiety. He cursed and swore, which surprised Wilson, who knew his piety in health, and who did not know the unbridled tongue of delirium. At length he seemed exhausted, and fell asleep; and Barton and Wilson drew near the fire, and talked together in whispers. They sat on the floor, for chairs there were none; the sole table was an old tub turned upside down. They put out the candle and conversed by the flickering fire-light.

"'Han yo known this chap long?' asked Barton.

"'Better nor three year. He's worked wi' Carsons that long, and were always a steady, civil-spoken fellow, though, as I said afore, somewhat of a Methodee. I wish I'd gotten a letter he sent

to his missis, a week or two agone, when he were on tramp for work. It did my heart good to read it; for yo see, I were a bit grumbling mysel; it seemed hard to be sponging on Jem, and taking a' his flesh-meat money to buy bread for me and them as I ought to be keeping. But, yo know, though I can earn naught, I mun eat summut. Well, as I telled ye, I were grumbling, when she,' indicating the sleeping woman by a nod, 'brought me Ben's letter, for she could na read hersel. It were as good as Bible-words; ne'er a word o' repining; a' about God being our father, and that we mun bear patiently whate'er he sends.'

"'Don ye think he's th' masters' father, too? I'd be loth to have 'em for brothers.'

"'Eh, John! donna talk so; sure there's many and many a master as good nor better than us.'

"'If you think so, tell me this. How comes it they're rich, and we're poor? I'd like to know that. Han they done as they'd be done by for us?'

"But Wilson was no arguer—no speechifier, as he would have called it. So Barton, seeing he was likely to have his own way, went on—

"'You'll say, at least many a one does, they'n getten capital, an' we'n getten none. I say, our labour's our capital, and we ought to draw interest on that. They get interest on their capital somehow a' this time, while ourn is lying idle, else how could they all live as they do? Besides, there's many on 'em as had naught to begin wi'; there's Carsons, and Duncombes, and Mengies, and many another as comed into Manchester with clothes to their backs, and that were all, and now they're worth their tens of thousands, a' gotten out of our labour; why the very land as fetched but sixty pound twenty years agone is now worth six hundred, and that, too, is owing to our labour; but look at yo, and see me, and poor Davenport yonder. Whatten better are we? They'n screwed us down to th' lowest peg, in order to make their great big fortunes, and build their great big houses, and we—why, we're just clemming, many and many of us. Can you say there's naught wrong in this?'"

These poor fellows, according to the story, took care of Davenport till he died in that loathsome cellar, and then had him decently buried. They knew not how soon his fate would overtake them, and they would then want friends. In the mean time, while disease and starvation were doing their work among the poor operatives, their masters were lolling on sofas, and, in the recreations of an evening, spending enough to relieve a hundred families. Perhaps, also, the masters' wives were concocting petitions on the subject of negro-slavery—that kind of philanthropy costing very little money or self-sacrifice.

It may be said that the story of "Mary Barton" is a fiction; but it must not be forgotten that it is the work of an English writer, and that its scenes are professedly drawn from the existing realities of life in Manchester, where the author resided. In the same work, we find an account of an historical affair, which is important in this connection, as showing how the wail of the oppressed is treated by the British aristocracy:—

"For three years past, trade had been getting worse and worse, and the price of provisions higher and higher. This disparity between the amount of the earnings of the working classes, and the price of their food, occasioned, in more cases than could well be imagined, disease and death. Whole families went through a gradual starvation. They only wanted a Dante to record their sufferings. And yet even his words would fall short of the awful truth; they could only present an outline of the tremendous facts of the destitution that surrounded thousands upon thousands in the terrible years 1839, 1840, and 1841. Even philanthropists,

who had studied the subject, were forced to own themselves perplexed in the endeavour to ascertain the real causes of the misery; the whole matter was of so complicated a nature, that it became next to impossible to understand it thoroughly. It need excite no surprise, then, to learn that a bad feeling between working men and the upper classes became very strong in this season of privation. The indigence and sufferings of the operatives induced a suspicion in the minds of many of them, that their legislators, their managers, their employers, and even their ministers of religion, were, in general, their oppressors and enemies; and were in league for their prostration and enthralment. The most deplorable and enduring evil that arose out of the period of commercial depression to which I refer, was this feeling of alienation between the different classes of society. It is so impossible to describe, or even faintly to picture, the state of distress which prevailed in the town at that time, that I will not attempt it; and yet I think again that surely, in a Christian land, it was not known even so feebly as words could tell it, or the more happy and fortunate would have thronged with their sympathy and their aid. In many instances the sufferers wept first, and then they cursed. Their vindictive feelings exhibited themselves in rabid politics. And when I hear, as I have heard, of the sufferings and privations of the poor, of provision-shops where ha'porths of tea, sugar, butter, and even flour, were sold to accommodate the indigent—of parents sitting in their clothes by the fire-side during the whole night, for seven weeks together, in order that their only bed and bedding might be reserved for the use of their large family—of others sleeping upon the cold hearth-stone for weeks in succession, without adequate means of providing themselves with food or fuel (and this in the depth of winter)—of others being compelled to fast for days together, uncheered by any hope of better fortune, living, moreover, or rather starving, in a crowded garret or damp cellar, and gradually sinking under the pressure of want and despair into a premature grave; and when this has been confirmed by the evidence of their care-worn looks, their excited feelings, and their desolate homes—can I wonder that many of them, in such times of

misery and destitution, spoke and acted with ferocious precipitation!

"An idea was now springing up among the operatives, that originated with the Chartists, but which came at last to be cherished as a darling child by many and many a one. They could not believe that government knew of their misery; they rather chose to think it possible that men could voluntarily assume the office of legislators for a nation, ignorant of its real state; as who should make domestic rules for the pretty behaviour of children, without caring to know that these children had been kept for days without food. Besides, the starving multitudes had heard that the very existence of their distress had been denied in Parliament; and though they felt this strange and inexplicable, yet the idea that their misery had still to be revealed in all its depths, and that then some remedy would be found, soothed their aching hearts, and kept down their rising fury.

"So a petition was framed, and signed by thousands in the bright spring days of 1839, imploring Parliament to hear witnesses who could testify to the unparalleled destitution of the manufacturing districts. Nottingham, Sheffield, Glasgow, Manchester, and many other towns, were busy appointing delegates to convey this petition, who might speak, not merely of what they had seen and had heard, but from what they had borne and suffered. Life-worn, gaunt, anxious, hunger-stamped men were those delegates."

The delegates went in a body to London, and applied at the Parliament House for permission to present their petition upon the subject nearest their hearts—the question of life and death. They were haughtily denied a hearing. The assemblage of the "best gentlemen in Europe," were, perhaps, discussing the best means of beautifying their parks and extending their estates. What had these rose-pink legislators to do with the miseries of the base-born rabble—the soil-serfs

of their chivalric Norman ancestors? The delegates returned in despair to their homes, to meet their starving relatives and friends, and tell them there was not a ray of hope. In France such a rejection of a humble petition from breadless working-men would have been followed by a revolution. In Great Britain the labourers seem to have the inborn submission of hereditary slaves. Though they feel the iron heel of the aristocracy upon their necks, and see their families starving around them, they delay, and still delay, taking that highway to freedom—manly and united rebellion.

The workmen employed in the factories are subjected to the cruel treatment of overlookers, who have the power of masters, and use it as tyrants. If an operative does not obey an order, he is not merely reproved, but kicked and beaten as a slave. He dare not resent, for if he did he would be turned forth to starve. Such being the system under which he works, the operative has the look and air of a degraded Helot. Most of them are unhealthy, destitute of spirit, and enfeebled by toil and privation. The hand-loom weavers, who are numerous in some districts, are the most miserable of the labourers, being hardly able to earn scant food and filthy shelter.

The hundreds of thousands of tender age employed in all the various branches of manufacture are in all cases the children of the poor. When the father goes

to the workhouse he has no longer any control over his children. They are at the mercy of the parish, and may be separated, apprenticed to all sorts of masters, and treated, to all intents and purposes, as slaves. The invention of labour-saving machinery has brought the services of children into great demand in the manufacturing towns. They may be *bought* at the workhouse at a cheap rate, and then they must trust to God alone for their future welfare. There is scarcely an instance in which the law ever interferes for their protection. The masters and overlookers are allowed to beat their younger operatives with impunity.

The following evidence contains instances of a treatment totally barbarous, and such are very frequent, according to the report of the commissioners:—

"When she was a child, too little to put on her ain claithes, the overlooker used to beat her till she screamed again. Gets many a good beating and swearing. They are all very ill-used. The overseer carries a strap. Has been licked four or five times. The boys are often severely strapped; the girls sometimes get a clout. The mothers often complain of this. Has seen the boys have black and blue marks after strapping. Three weeks ago the overseer struck him in the eye with his clenched fist, so as to force him to be absent two days. Another overseer used to beat him with his fist, striking him so that his arm was black and blue. Has often seen the workers beat cruelly. Has seen the girls strapped; but the boys were beat so that they fell to the floor in the course of the beating with a rope with four tails, called a cat. Has seen the boys black and blue, crying for mercy.

"The other night a little girl came home cruelly beaten;

wished to go before a magistrate, but was advised not. That man is always strapping the children. The boys are badly used. They are whipped with a strap till they cry out and shed tears; has seen the managers kick and strike them. Has suffered much from the slubbers' ill treatment. It is the practice of the slubbers to go out and amuse themselves for an hour or so, and then make up their work in the same time, which is a great fatigue to the piecers, keeping them 'on the run' for an hour and a half together, besides kicking and beating them for doing it badly, when they were so much tired. The slubbers are all brutes to the children; they get intoxicated, and then kick them about; they are all alike. Never complained to the master; did once to his mother, and she gave him a halfpenny not to mind it, to go back to work like a good boy. Sometimes he used to be surly, and would not go, and then she always had that tale about the halfpenny; sometimes he got the halfpenny, and sometimes not.

"He has seen the other children beaten. The little girls standing at the drawing-head. They would run home and fetch their mothers sometimes.

"Hears the spinners swear very bad at their piecers, and sees 'em lick 'em sometimes; some licks 'em with a strap, some licks 'em with hand; some straps is as long as your arm, some is very thick, and some thin; don't know where they get the straps. There is an overlooker in the room; he very seldom comes in; they won't allow 'em if they knows of it. (Child volunteered the last observation. Asked how she knew that the overlookers would not allow the spinners to lick the little hands; answers, 'Because I've heard 'em say so.') Girls cry when struck with straps; only one girl struck yesterday; they very seldom strike 'em.

"There is an overlooker in the room, who is a man. The doffer always scolds her when she is idle, not the overlooker; the doffer is a girl. Sometimes sees her hit the little hands; always hits them with her hands. Sometimes the overlooker hits the little hands; always with her hand when she does. Her mother is a throstle-spinner, in her room. The overseer scolds the little hands; says he'll bag 'em; sometimes swears at 'em. Some-

times overseer beats a 'little hand;' when he does it, it is always with his open hand; it is not so very hard; sometimes on the face, sometimes on the back. He never beats her. Some on 'em cries when they are beat, some doesn't. He beats very seldom; didn't beat any yesterday, nor last week, nor week before; doesn't know how long it is ago since she has seen him strike a girl. If our little helper gets careless we may have occasion to correct her a bit. Some uses 'em very bad; beats 'em; but only with the hand; and pulls their ears. Some cry, but not often. Ours is a good overlooker, but has heard overlookers curse very bad. The women weavers themselves curse. Has never cursed herself. Can say so honestly from her heart.

"Drawers are entirely under the control of the weavers, said a master; they must obey their employer; if they do not they are sometimes beat and sometimes discharged. *I chastise them occasionally with a light whip;* do not allow it by my workmen; sometimes they are punished with a fool's-cap, sometimes with a *cane*, but not severely."

"William M. Beath, of Mr. Owen's New Lanark Mills, deposed: 'Thinks things improved under Mr. Owen's management. Recollects seeing children beaten very severe at times. He himself has been beaten very sore, so bad that his head was not in its useful state for several days. Recollects, in particular, one boy—James Barry—who was very unfond of working in the mill, who was always beaten to his work by his father, with his hands and feet; the boy was then beaten with a strap by the overseers, for being too late, and not being willing to come. Has seen him so beaten by Robert Shirley, William Watson, and Robert Sim. The boy, James Barry, never came properly to manhood. It was always conjectured that he had too many beatings. He was the cruellest beat boy ever I saw there. There was a boy, whose name he does not recollect, and while he (W. M. B.) was working as a weaver at Lanark, having left the mill, and his death was attributed by many to a kick in the groin from Peter Gall, an overseer. Does not recollect whether the ill usage of the children above alluded to took place in Mr. Owen's time, or before he came; but there was certainly a great improvement, in many re-

spects, under his management, particularly in cleanliness, shorter hours, and the establishment of schools. Has been three years employed in his present situation. Has two children of his own in the mill. Does not believe (and he has every opportunity of knowing) that the children of this mill have been tampered with by anybody, with a view to their testimony before the commissioners, and that they are not afraid to tell the truth. He himself would, on account of his children, like a little shorter hours and a little less wages; they would then have a better opportunity of attending a night-school.'

"Henry Dunn, aged twenty-seven, a spinner: 'Has been five years on this work. Went at eight years of age to Mr. Dunn's mill at Duntochar; that was a country situation, and much healthier than factories situated in town. They worked then from six to eight; twelve hours and a half for work, and one hour and a half for meals. Liked that mill as well as any he ever was in. Great attention was paid to the cleanliness and comfort of the people. The wages were lower there at that time than they were at Glasgow. After leaving Duntochar, he came into town to see Mr. Humphrey's, (now Messrs. Robert Thompson,) which was at that time one continued scene of oppression. A system of cruelty prevailed there at that time, which was confined almost entirely to that work. The wheels were very small, and young men and women of the ages of seventeen and eighteen were the spinners. There was a tenter to every flat, and he was considered as a sort of whipper-in, to force the children to extra exertion. Has seen wounds inflicted upon children by tenters, by Alexander Drysdale, among others, with a belt or stick, or the first thing that came uppermost. Saw a kick given by the above-mentioned Alexander Drysdale, which broke two ribs of a little boy. Helped to carry the boy down to a surgeon. The boy had been guilty of some very trifling offence, such as calling names to the next boy. But the whole was the same; all the tenters were alike. Never saw any ill-treatment of the children at this mill. Mr. Stevenson is a very fine man. The machinery in the spinning department is quite well boxed in—it could not be better; but the cards might be more protected with great advan-

tage. It is very hot in winter, but he can't tell how hot. There is no thermometer.'

"Ellen Ferrier, aged thirteen; carries bobbins: 'Has been three years in this mill. Was one year before in another mill in this town; doesn't like neither of them very well, because she was always very tired from working from half-past five o'clock in the morning until half-past seven, with only two intervals of half an hour each. She sometimes falls asleep now. She worked formerly in the lower flat. When Charles Kennedy was the overseer he licked us very bad, beat our heads with his hand, and kicked us very bad when the ends were down. He was aye licking them, and my gademother (stepmother) has two or three times complained to Mr. Shanks, (senior,) and Mr. S. always told him about it, but he never minded. Does not know what he left the mill for. A good many folks went away from this mill just for Kennedy. Can read; cannot write.'

"Mary Scott, aged fourteen: 'Has been here two years. Was here with Charles Kennedy. When he has seen us just speaking to one another, he struck us with his hands and with his feet. He beat us when he saw any of the ends down. Has seen him strike Ellen Ferrier (the last witness) very often, just with his hands; and has seen him strike Betty Sutherland; can't tell how often, but it was terrible often.'

"Euphemia Anderson, aged twenty: 'Has been three years at this mill; has been in different mills since she was seven years old. About six years ago she was taken ill with pains in the legs, and remained ill for three years. I wasn't able to stand. Thinks it was the standing so long that made her ill. She is now again quite in good health, except that she is sair-footed sometimes. They have seats to sit down upon. When the work is bad, we cannot get time to sit down. When the flax is good we have a good deal of time. Has never seen children beat by Charles Kennedy, but has heard talk of it; has often heard them complain of him, never of anybody else. Can read; cannot write. Never went to a school; never had muckle time. She would give up some of her wages to have shorter hours. Her usual dinner is broth and potatoes.'"

The next evidence is particularly valuable, as it came from a person who had left the factory work; and having an independent business, he may be presumed to have spoken without fear or favour:—

"William Campbell, aged thirty-seven: 'Is a grocer, carrying on business in Belfast. Was bred up a cotton-spinner. Went first as a piecer to his father, who was a spinner at Mr. Hussy's mill, Graham Square, Glasgow, and afterward to several mills in this place, among which was Mr. John McCrackan's, where he was, altogether, piecer and spinner between four and five years, (1811–1818.) There was a regulation at that time there, that every hand should be fined if five minutes too late at any working hour in the morning and after meals—the younger 5*d.*, which amounted to the whole wages of some of the lesser ones; the older hands were fined as high as 10*d.* The treatment of the children at that time was very cruel. Has seen Robert Martin, the manager, continually beating the children—with his hands generally, sometimes with his clenched fist. Has often seen his sister Jane, then about fourteen, struck by him; and he used to pinch her ears till the blood came, and pull her hair. The faults were usually very trifling. If on coming in he should find any girl combing her hair, that was an offence for which he would beat her severely, and he would do so if he heard them talking to one another. He never complained of the ill-usage of his sister, because he believed if he did, his father and two sisters, who were both employed in the mill, would have been immediately dismissed. A complaint was made by the father of a little girl, against Martin, for beating a child. Mr. Ferrer, the police magistrate, admonished him. He was a hot-headed, fiery man, and when he saw the least fault, or what he conceived to be a fault, he just struck them at once. Does not recollect any child getting a lasting injury from any beating here. The treatment of the children at the mill was the only thing which could be called cruelty which he had witnessed. One great hardship to people employed in the factories is the want of good water,

which exists in most of them. At only one of the mills which he worked at was there water such as could be drunk brought into the flats, and that was Mr. Holdsworth's mill, Anderson, Glasgow. From what he recollects of his own and his sister's feelings, he considers the hours which were then and are still commonly occupied in actual labour—viz. twelve hours and a half per day—longer than the health of children can sustain, and also longer than will admit of any time being reserved in the evening for their instruction.' "

These instances of steady, systematic cruelty, in the treatment of children, go far beyond any thing recorded of slave-drivers in other countries. If an American overseer was to whip a slave to death, an awful groan would express the horror of English lords and ladies. But in the factories of Great Britain we have helpless children not only kicked and beaten, but liable at any moment to receive a mortal wound from the billy-roller of an exasperated slubber. Here is more evidence, which we cannot think will flag in interest :—

"John Gibb, eleven years old, solemnly sworn, deposes, 'that he has been about three years a piecer in one of the spinning-rooms; that the heat and confinement makes his feet sair, and makes him sick and have headaches, and he often has a stitch in his side; that he is now much paler than he used to be; that he receives 4*s*. 6*d*. a week, which he gives to his mother; that he is very desirous of short hours, that he might go to school more than he can do at present; that the spinners often lick him, when he is in fault, with taws of leather.'

"Alexander Wylie, twenty-six years old, solemnly sworn, deposes, 'that he is a spinner in one of the spinning departments; that most of the spinners keep taws to preserve their authority, but he does not; that he has seen them pretty severely whipped,

when they were in fault; that he has seen piecers beat by the overseers, even with their clenched fists; that he has seen both boys and girls so treated; that he has seen John Ewan beating his little piecers severely, even within these few weeks; that when he had a boy as a piecer, he beat him even more severely than the girls; that he never saw a thermometer in his flat, till to-day, when, in consequence of a bet, the heat was tried, and it was found to be 72°, but that they are spinning coarser cotton in his flat than in some of the other flats, where greater heat is requisite.'

"Bell Sinclair, thirteen years old, solemnly sworn, deposes, 'that she has been about four years in the same flat with John Gibb, a preceding witness; that all the spinners in the apartment keep a leather strap, or taws, with which to punish the piecers, both boys and girls—the young ones chiefly when they are negligent; that she has been often punished by Francis Gibb and by Robert Clarke, both with taws and with their hands, and with his open cuff; that he has licked her on the side of the head and on her back with his hands, and with the strap on her back and arms; that she was never much the worse of the beating, although she has sometimes cried and shed tears when Gibb or Clarke was hitting her sair.' Deposes that she cannot write.

"Mary Ann Collins, ten years old, solemnly sworn, deposes, 'that she has been a year in one of the spinning-rooms in which John Ewan is a spinner; that yesterday he gave her a licking with the taws; that all the spinners keep taws except Alexander Wylie; that he beat her once before till she grat; that she has sometimes a pain in her breast, and was absent yesterday on that account.' Deposes that she cannot write.

"Daniel McGinty, twenty-two years old, solemnly sworn, deposes, 'that he has been nearly two years a spinner here; that he notices the piecers frequently complain of bad health; that he was a petitioner for short hours, so that the people might have more time for their education as well as for health; that he had a strap to punish the children when they were in fault, but he has not had one for some time, and the straps are not so common now as they were formerly; that he and the other spinners

prefer giving the piecers a lick on the side of the head with their hands, than to use a strap at all; that he has seen instances of piecers being knocked down again and again, by a blow from the hand, in other mills, but not since he came to this one; that he has been knocked down himself in Barrowfield mill, by Lauchlin McWharry, the spinner to whom he was a piecer.'

"Isabella Stewart, twenty-two years old, solemnly sworn, deposes, 'that she has been four years at this mill, and several years at other mills; that she is very hoarse, and subject to cough, and her feet and ankles swell in the evening; that she is very anxious for short hours—thirteen hours are real lang hours—but she has nothing else to find fault with; that Alexander Simpson straps the young workers, and even gives her, or any of the workers, if they are too late, a lick with the strap across the shoulders; that he has done this within a week or two; that he sometimes gives such a strap as to hurt her, but it is only when he is in a passion.' Deposes that 'she cannot write. In the long hours they canna get time to write nor to do nae thing.'

"James Patterson, aged sixty years, solemnly sworn, deposes, 'that he is an overseer in Messrs. James and William Brown's flax-spinning mill, at Dundee, and has been in their employment for about seven years; that he was previously at the spinning mill at Glamis for twelve years, and there lost his right hand and arm, caught by the belt of the wheels, in the preparing floor; that he is in the reeling flat, with the women, who are tired and sleepy; one of them—Margaret Porter—at present in bed, merely from standing so long for a fortnight past; that it would be God's blessing for every one to have shorter hours; that he has been about forty years in spinning-mills, and has seen the young people so lashed with a leather belt that they could hardly stand: that at Trollick, a mill now given up, he has seen them lashed, skin naked, by the manager, James Brown; that at Moniferth he has seen them taken out of bed, when they did not get up in time, and lashed with horsewhips to their work, carrying their clothes, while yet naked, to the work, in their arms with them.'

"William Roe, (examined at his own request:) 'I am consta-

ble of Radford. I was in the army. I went to work with Mr. Wilson in 1825. I had been with Strutts, at Belper, before that. The reason I left was this: I was told the overlooker was leathering one of my boys. I had two sons there. The overlooker was Crooks. I found him strapping the boy, and I struck him. I did not stop to ask whether the boy had done any thing. I had heard of his beating him before. Smith came up, and said I should work there no more till I had seen Mr. Wilson. My answer was, that neither I nor mine should ever work more for such a mill as that was. It was but the day before I took the boy to Smith, to show him that he had no time to take his victuals till he came out at twelve. There was no satisfaction, but he laughed at it. That was the reason I took the means into my own hands. Crooks threatened to fetch a warrant for me, but did not. I told him the master durst not let him. The boy had been doing nothing, only could not keep up his work enough to please them. I left the mill, and took away my sons. One was ten, the other was between eight and nine. They went there with me. The youngest was not much past eight when he went. I heard no more of it. I put all my reasons down in a letter to Mr. Wilson, but I heard no more of it. Smith was sent away afterward, but I don't know why. I have heard it was for different ill-usages. Crooks is there now. Hogg was the overlooker in my room. I have often seen him beat a particular boy who was feeding cards. One day he pulled his ear till he pulled it out of the socket, and it bled very much. I mean he tore the bottom of the ear from the head. I went to him and said, if that boy was mine I'd give him a better threshing than ever he had in his life. It was reported to Mr. S. Wilson, and he told me I had better mind my own business, and not meddle with the overlookers. I never heard that the parents complained. Mr. S. Wilson is dead now. Mr. W. Wilson said to me afterward, I had made myself very forward in meddling with the overlookers' business. I was to have come into the warehouse at Nottingham, but in consequence of my speaking my mind I lost the situation. I never had any complaint about my work while I was there, nor at Mr. Strutt's. I left Mr. Strutt's in hopes to better myself. I

came as a machine smith. I went back to Mr. Strutt's, at Milford, after I left Wilson, for two years. The men never had more than twenty-five minutes for their dinner, and no extra pay for stopping there. I dressed the top cards, and ground them. I never heard that Mr. Wilson proposed to stop the breakfast hour, and that the hands wished to go on. I don't think such a thing could be. Whilst I worked there we always went in at half-past five, and worked till nigh half-past seven. We were never paid a farthing overtime. At Strutt's, if ever we worked an hour overtime, we were paid an hour and a half. I have seen Smith take the girls by the hair with one hand, and slap them in the face with the other; big and little, it made no difference. He worked there many years before he was turned away. He works in the mill again now, but not as an overlooker. I never knew of any complaint to the magistrate against Smith. I had 12*s.* when I was there for standing wages. It was about nine in the morning my boy was beat. I think it was in the middle of the day the boy's ear was pulled. The work was very severe there while it lasted. A boy generally had four breakers and finisher-cards to mind. Such a boy might mind six when he had come on to eleven or twelve; I mean finishers. A boy can mind from three to four breakers. Any way they had not time to get their victuals. I don't know what the present state of the mill is as to beating. Men will not complain to the magistrates while work is so scarce, and they are liable to be turned out; and if they go to the parish, why there it is, 'Why, you had work, why did you not stay at it?'"

Robert Blincoe, a small manufacturer, once an apprentice to a cotton mill, and one who had seen and suffered much in factories, was sworn and examined by Dr. Hawkins, on the 18th of May, 1833. In the evidence, which follows, it will be noted that most of the sufferers mentioned were parish children, without protectors of any kind:—

"'Do you know where you were born?' 'No; I only know that I came out of St. Pancras parish, London.'

"'Do you know the name of your parents?' 'No. I used to be called, when young, Robert Saint; but when I received my indentures I was called Robert Blincoe; and I have gone by that name ever since.'

"'What age are you?' 'Near upon forty, according to my indentures."

"'Have you no other means of knowing your age but what you find in your indentures?' 'No, I go by that.'

"'Do you work at a cotton mill?' 'Not now. I was bound apprentice to a cotton mill for fourteen years, from St. Pancras parish; then I got my indentures. I worked five or six years after, at different mills, but now I have got work of my own. I rent power from a mill in Stockport, and have a room to myself. My business is a sheet wadding manufacturer.'

"'Why did you leave off working at the cotton mills?' 'I got tired of it, the system is so bad; and I had saved a few pounds. I got deformed there; my knees began to bend in when I was fifteen; you see how they are, (showing them.) There are many, many far worse than me at Manchester.'

"'Can you take exercise with ease?' 'A very little makes me sweat in walking. I have not the strength of those who are straight.'

"'Have you ever been in a hospital, or under doctors, for your knees or legs?' 'Never in a hospital, or under doctors for that, but from illness from overwork I have been. When I was near Nottingham there were about eighty of us together, boys and girls, all 'prenticed out from St. Pancras parish, London, to cotton mills; many of us used to be ill, but the doctors said it was only for want of kitchen physic, and want of more rest.'

"'Had you any accidents from machinery?' 'No, nothing to signify much; I have not myself, but I saw, on the 6th of March last, a man killed by machinery at Stockport; he was smashed, and he died in four or five hours; I saw him while the accident took place; he was joking with me just before; it was in my own room. I employ a poor sore cripple under me, who could not

easily get work anywhere else. A young man came good-naturedly from another room to help my cripple, and he was accidentally drawn up by the strap, and was killed. I have known many such accidents take place in the course of my life.'

"'Recollect a few.' 'I cannot recollect the exact number, but I have known several: one was at Lytton Mill, at Derbyshire; another was the master of a factory at Staley Bridge, of the name of Bailey. Many more I have known to receive injuries, such as the loss of a limb. There is plenty about Stockport that is going about now with one arm; they cannot work in the mills, but they go about with jackasses and such like. One girl, Mary Richards, was made a cripple, and remains so now, when I was in Lowdham mill, near Nottingham. She was lapped up by a shaft underneath the drawing-frame. That is now an old-fashioned machinery.'

"'Have you any children?' 'Three.'

"'Do you send them to factories?' 'No. I would rather have them transported. In the first place, they are standing upon one leg, lifting up one knee a greater part of the day, keeping the ends up from the spindle. I consider that that employment makes many cripples; then there is the heat and dust; then there are so many different forms of cruelty used upon them; then they are so liable to have their fingers catched, and to suffer other accidents from the machinery; then the hours is so long that I have seen them tumble down asleep among the straps and machinery, and so get cruelly hurt; then I would not have a child of mine there, because there is not good morals; there is such a lot of them together that they learn mischief.'

"'What do you do with your children?' 'My eldest of thirteen has been to school, and can teach me. She now stays at home, and helps her mother in the shop. She is as tall as me, and is very heavy. Very different from what she would have been if she had worked in a factory. My two youngest go to school, and are both healthy. I send them every day two miles to school. I know from experience the ills of confinement.'

"'What are the forms of cruelty that you spoke of just now as being practised upon children in factories?' 'I have seen the

time when two hand-vices, of a pound weight each, more or less, have been screwed to my ears at Lytton mill, in Derbyshire. Here are the scars still remaining behind my ears. Then three or four of us have been hung at once to a cross-beam above the machinery, hanging by our hands, without shirts or stockings. Mind, we were apprentices, without father or mother, to take care of us; I don't say they often do that now. Then, we used to stand up, in a skip, without our shirts, and be beat with straps or sticks; the skip was to prevent us from running away from the strap.'

"'Do you think such things are done now in Manchester?' 'No, not just the same things; but I think the children are still beaten by overlookers; not so much, however, in Manchester, where justice is always at hand, as in country places. Then they used to tie on a twenty-eight pounds weight, (one or two at once,) according to our size, to hang down on our backs, with no shirts on. I have had them myself. Then they used to tie one leg up to the faller, while the hands were tied behind. I have a book written about these things, describing my own life and sufferings. I will send it to you.'*

"'Do the masters know of these things, or were they done only by the overlookers?' 'The masters have often seen them, and have been assistants in them.'

The work is so protracted that the children are exhausted, and many become crippled from standing too long in unhealthy positions:—

"John Wright, steward in the silk factory of Messrs. Brinsley and Shatwell, examined by Mr. Tufnell.

"'What are the effects of the present system of labour?' 'From my earliest recollections, I have found the effects to be awfully detrimental to the well-being of the operative; I have observed, frequently, children carried to factories, unable to walk, and that

* Enclosed for the inspection of the Central Board. It is entitled, "A Memoir of Robert Blincoe, &c., Manchester." J. Doherty. 1852.

entirely owing to excessive labour and confinement. The degradation of the work-people baffles all description; frequently have two of my sisters been obliged to be assisted to the factory and home again, until by and by they could go no longer, being totally crippled in their legs. And in the next place, I remember some ten or twelve years ago working in one of the largest firms in Macclesfield, (Messrs. Baker and Pearson,) with about twenty-five men, where they were scarce one-half fit for his majesty's service. Those that are straight in their limbs are stunted in their growth, much inferior to their fathers in point of strength. 3dly. Through excessive labour and confinement there is often a total loss of appetite; a kind of languor steals over the whole frame, enters to the very core, saps the foundation of the best constitution, and lays our strength prostrate in the dust. In the fourth place, by protracted labour there is an alarming increase of cripples in various parts of this town, which has come under my own observation and knowledge.'"

Young sufferers gave the following evidence to the commissioners:—

"'Many a time has been so fatigued that she could hardly take off her clothes at night, or put them on in the morning; her mother would be raging at her, because when she sat down she could not get up again through the house.' 'Looks on the long hours as a great bondage.' 'Thinks they are not much better than the Israelites in Egypt, and their life is no pleasure to them.' 'When a child, was so tired that she could seldom eat her supper, and never awoke of herself.'—'Are the hours to be shortened?' earnestly demanded one of these girls of the commissioner who was examining her, 'for they are too long.'"

The truth of the account given by the children of the fatigue they experience by the ordinary labour of the factory is confirmed by the testimony of their parents. In general, the representation made by parents is like the following:—

"'Her children come home so tired and worn out they can hardly eat their supper.' 'Has often seen his daughter come home in the evening so fatigued that she would go to bed supperless.' 'Has seen the young workers absolutely oppressed, and unable to sit down or rise up; this has happened to his own children.'

These statements are confirmed by the evidence of the adult operatives. The depositions of the witnesses of this class are to the effect, that "the younger workers are greatly fatigued;" that "children are often very severe (unwilling) in the mornings;" that "children are quite tired out;" that "the long hours exhaust the workers, especially the young ones, to such a degree that they can hardly walk home;" that "the young workers are absolutely oppressed, and so tired as to be unable to sit down or rise up;" that "younger workers are so tired they often cannot raise their hands to their head;" that "all the children are very keen for short hours, thinking them now such bondage that they might as well be in a prison;" that "the children, when engaged in their regular work, are often exhausted beyond what can be expressed;" that "the sufferings of the children absolutely require that the hours should be shortened."

The depositions of the overlookers are to the same effect, namely, that "though the children may not complain, yet that they seem tired and sleepy, and happy to get out of doors to play themselves. That, "the work over-tires the workers in general." "Often sees the children very tired and stiff-like." "Is entirely of

opinion, after real experience, that the hours of labour are far too long for the children, for their health and education; has from twenty-two to twenty-four boys under his charge, from nine to about fourteen years old, and they are generally much tired at night, always anxious, asking if it be near the mill-stopping." "Never knew a single worker among the children that did not complain of the long hours, which prevent them from getting education, and from getting health in the open air."

The managers in like manner state, that "the labour exhausts the children;" that "the workers are tired in the evening;" that "children inquire anxiously for the hour of stopping." And admissions to the same effect, on the part of managers and proprietors, will be found in every part of the Scotch depositions.

In the north-eastern district the evidence is equally complete that the fatigue of the young workers is great.

"'I have known the children,' says one witness, 'to hide themselves in the store among the wool, so that they should not go home when the work was over, when we have worked till ten or eleven. I have seen six or eight fetched out of the store and beat home; beat out of the mill however; I do not know why they should hide themselves, unless it was that they were too tired to go home.'

"'Many a one I have had to rouse in the last hour, when the work is very slack, from fatigue.' 'The children were very much jaded, especially when we worked late at night.' 'The children bore the long hours very ill indeed.' 'Exhausted in body and depressed in mind by the length of the hours and the height of the temperature.' 'I found, when I was an overlooker, that, after

the children from eight to twelve years had worked eight, nine, or ten hours, they were nearly ready to faint; some were asleep; some were only kept to work by being spoken to, or by a little chastisement, to make them jump up. I was sometimes obliged to chastise them when they were almost fainting, and it hurt my feelings; then they would spring up and work pretty well for another hour; but the last two or three hours were my hardest work, for they then got so exhausted.' 'I have never seen fathers carrying their children backward nor forward to the factories; but I have seen children, apparently under nine, and from nine to twelve years of age, going to the factories at five in the morning almost asleep in the streets.'"

"Ellen Cook, card-filler: 'I was fifteen last winter. I worked on then sometimes day and night;—may be twice a week; I used to earn 4s. a week; I used to go home to dinner; I was a feeder then; I am a feeder still. We used to come at half-past eight at night, and work all night till the rest of the girls came in the morning; they would come at seven, I think. Sometimes we worked on till half-past eight the next night, after we had been working all the night before. We worked on meal-hours, except at dinner. I have done that sometimes three nights a week, and sometimes four nights. It was just as the overlooker chose. John Singleton; he is overlooker now. Sometimes the slubbers would work on all night too; not always. The piecemers would have to stay all night then too. It was not often though that the slubbers worked all night. We worked by ourselves. It was when one of the boilers was spoiled; that was the reason we had to work all night. The engine would not carry all the machines. I was paid for the over-hours when we worked day and night; not for meal-hours. We worked meal-hours, but were not paid for them. George Lee is the slubber in this room. He has worked all night; not often, I think; not above twice all the time we worked so; sometimes he would not work at all. The piecemers would work too when he did. They used to go to sleep, poor things! when they had over-hours in the night. I think they were ready enough to sleep sometimes, when they only worked in the daytime. I never was a piecemer; sometimes I go to help them when there are a good

many cardings. We have to get there by half-past five, in the morning, now. The engine begins then. We don't go home to breakfast. Sometimes we have a quarter of an hour; sometimes twenty minutes; sometimes none. Them in the top-room have a full half hour. We can't take half an hour if we like it; we should get jawed; we should have such a noise, we should not hear the last of it. The pieceners in this room (there were four) have the same time as we do. In some of the rooms they forfeit them if they are five minutes too late; they don't in this room. The slubber often beats the pieceners. He has a strap, and wets it, and gives them a strap over the hands, poor things! They cry out ever so loud sometimes; I don't know how old they are.'"

"James Simpson, aged twenty-four, solemnly sworn, deposes: 'That he has been about fifteen years in spinning mills; that he has been nearly a year as an overseer in Mr. Kinmond's mill here, and was dismissed on the 2d of May, for supporting, at a meeting of the operatives, the Ten Hours Bill; that he was one of the persons to receive subscriptions, in money, to forward the business, and was dismissed, not on a regular pay-day, but on a Thursday evening, by James Malcolm, manager, who told him that he was dismissed for being a robber to his master in supporting the Ten Hours Bill; that by the regulations of the mill he was entitled to a week's notice, and that a week's wages were due to him at the time, but neither sum has been paid; that he was two or three times desired by the overseer to strike the boys if he saw them at any time sitting, and has accordingly struck them with a strap, but never so severely as to hurt them; that he is not yet employed.' And the preceding deposition having been read over to him, he was cautioned to be perfectly sure that it was true in all particulars, as it would be communicated to the overseer named by him, and might still be altered if, in any particular, he wished the change of a word; but he repeated his assertion, on oath, that it was.

"Ann Kennedy, sixteen years old, solemnly sworn, deposes: 'That she has been nearly a year a piecer to James McNish, a preceding witness; that she has had swelled feet for about a year, but she thinks them rather better; that she has a great deal of pain, both in her feet and legs, so that she was afraid she would

not be able to go on with the work; that she thought it was owing to the heat and the long standing on her feet; that it is a very warm room she is in; that she sometimes looks at the thermometer and sees it at 82°, or 84,° or 86°; that all the people in the room are very pale, and a good deal of them complaining.' Deposes, that she cannot write.

"Joseph Hurtley, aged forty-four: 'Is an overlooker of the flax-dressing department. Has been there since the commencement. Thinks, from what he observes, that the hours are too long for children. Is led to think so from seeing the children much exhausted toward the conclusion of the work. When he came here first, and the children were all new to the work, he found that by six o'clock they began to be drowsy and sleepy. He took different devices to keep them awake, such as giving them snuff, &c.; but this drowsiness partly wore off in time, from habit, but he still observes the same with all the boys, (they are all boys in his department,) and it continues with them for some time. Does not know whether the children go to school in the evening, but he thinks, from their appearance, that they would be able to receive very little benefit from tuition.

" 'The occupation of draw-boys and girls to harness hand-loom weavers, in their own shops, is by far the lowest and least sought after of any connected with the manufacture of cotton. They are poor, neglected, ragged, dirty children. They seldom are taught any thing, and they work as long as the weaver, that is, as long as they can see, standing on the same spot, always barefooted, on an earthen, cold, damp floor, in a close, damp cellar, for thirteen or fourteen hours a day.

" 'The power-loom dressers have all been hand-loom weavers, but now prevent any more of their former companions from being employed in their present business.

" 'They earn 2*s.* per week, and eat porridge, if their parents can afford it; if not, potatoes and salt. They are, almost always, between nine and thirteen years of age, and look healthy, though some have been two or three years at the business; while the weaver, for whom they draw, is looking pale, squalid, and underfed.

"'There are some hundreds of children thus employed in the immediate neighbourhood of Glasgow.'"

In Leicester, Mr. Drinkwater, of the Factory Commission, found that great cruelty was practised upon the children employed in some of the factories, by the workmen called "slubbers," for whom the young creatures act as piecers. Thomas Hough, a trimmer and dyer, who had worked at Robinson's factory, deposed—

"'The children were beaten at the factory; I complained, and they were turned away. If I could have found the man at the time there would have something happened, I am sure. I knew the man; it was the slubber with whom they worked. His name was Smith. Robinson had the factory then. I had my second son in to Mr. Robinson, and stripped him, and showed him how cruelly he had been beaten. There were nineteen bruises on his back and posteriors. It was not with the billy-roller. It was with the strap. He has often been struck with the billy-roller at other times, over the head. Robinson rebuked the man, and said he should not beat them any more. The children were beat several times after that; and on account of my making frequent complaints they turned the children away. They worked with Smith till they left. Smith was of a nasty disposition, rather. I would say of the slubbers generally, that they are a morose, ill-tempered set. Their pay depends on the children's work. The slubbers are often off drinking, and then they must work harder to get the cardings up. I have seen that often. That is in the lamb's-wool trade. Mr. Gamble is one of the most humane men that ever lived, by all that I hear, and he will not allow the slubbers to touch the children, on any pretence; if they will not work, he turns them away. There gets what they call flies on the cardings, that is, when the cardings are not properly pieced; and it is a general rule to strike the children when that happens too often. They allow so many ratched cardings, as they call them, in a certain time; and if there are more, they call the

children round to the billy-gate and strap them. I have seen the straps which some of them use; they are as big as the strap on my son's lathe yonder, about an inch broad, (looking at it.) Oh, it is bigger than this, (it measured 7-8ths.) It is about an inch. I have seen the children lie down on the floor, and the slubber strike on them as they lay. It depends entirely on the temper of the man; sometimes they will only swear at them, sometimes they will beat them. They will be severe with them at one time, and very familiar at another, and run on with all sorts of debauched language, and take indecent liberties with the feeders and other big girls, before the children. That is the reason why they call the factories hell-holes. There are some a good deal different. The overlookers do not take much notice generally. They pick out bullies, generally, for overlookers. It is very necessary to have men of a determined temper to keep the hands in order.

"'I have known my children get strapped two or three times between a meal. At all times of the day. Sometimes they would escape for a day or two together, just as it might happen. Then they get strapped for being too late. They make the children sum up, that is, pick up the waste, and clean up the billies during the meal-time, so that the children don't get their time. The cruelty complained of in the factories is chiefly from the slubbers. There is nobody so closely connected with the children as the slubbers. There is no other part of the machinery with which I am acquainted where the pay of the man depends on the work of the children so much.'"

"Joseph Badder, a slubber, deposed: 'Slubbing and spinning is very heavy. Those machines are thrown aside now. The spinners did not like them, nor the masters neither. They did not turn off such stuff as they expected. I always found it more difficult to keep my piecers awake the last hours of a winter's evening. I have told the master, and I have been told by him that I did not half hide them. This was when they were working from six to eight. I have known the children hide themselves in the store among the wool, so that they should not go home when the work was over, when we have worked till ten or eleven. I have seen six or eight fetched out of the store and beat home;

beat out of the mill. However, I do not know why they should hide themselves, unless it was they were too tired to go home. My piecers had two hours for meals. Other parts of the work I have known them work children, from seven to twelve in age, from six in the morning till ten or eleven at night, and give no time for meals; eat their victuals as they worked; the engines running all the time. The engine never stopped at meal-times; it was just as the spinner chose whether the children worked on or not. They made more work if they went on. I never would allow any one to touch my piecers. The foreman would come at times, and has strapped them, and I told him I would serve him the same if he touched them. I have seen the man who worked the other billy beat his piecers. I have seen children knocked down by the billy-rollers. It is a weapon that a man will easily take up in a passion. I do not know any instance of a man being prosecuted for it. The parents are unwilling, for fear the children should lose their work. I know Thorpe has been up before the magistrate half a dozen times or more, on the complaint of the parents. He has been before the bench, at the Exchange, as we call it, and I have seen him when he came back, when the magistrates have reprimanded Thorpe, and told the parents they had better take the children away. After that he has been sometimes half drunk, perhaps, and in a passion, and would strap them for the least thing, more than he did before. I remember once that he was fined; it was about two years and a half ago; it was for beating a little girl; he was fined 10*s*. I have seen him strap the women when they took the part of the children. The master complained he was not strict enough. I know from Thorpe that the master always paid his expenses when he was before the magistrate. I believe they generally do in all the factories. I have frequently had complaints against myself by the parents of the children, for beating them. I used to beat them. I am sure no man can do without it who works long hours; I am sure he cannot. I told them I was very sorry after I had done it, but I was forced to do it. The master expected me to do my work, and I could not do mine unless they did theirs. One lad used to say to me frequently, (he was a jocular kind of lad,) that he liked a

good beating at times, it helped him to do his work. I used to joke with them to keep up their spirits. *I have seen them fall asleep, and they have been performing their work with their hands while they were asleep, after the billy had stopped, when their work was done. I have stopped and looked at them for two minutes, going through the motions of piecening, fast asleep, when there was really no work to do, and they were really doing nothing.* I believe, when we have been working long hours, that they have never been washed, but on a Saturday night, for weeks together.

"Thomas Clarke, (examined at request of Joseph Badder:) 'I am aged eleven, I work at Cooper's factory; the rope-walk. I spin there. I earn 4*s.* a week there. I have been there about one year and a half. I was in Ross's factory before that. I was piecener there. I piecened for Joseph Badder one while, then for George Castle. I piecened for Badder when he left. Badder told me I was wanted here. We have not been talking about it. I remember that Jesse came to the machine, and Badder would not let him go nigh, and so they got a scuffling about it. I was very nigh nine years of age when I first went to piecen. I got 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, at first. I think I was a good hand at it. When I had been there half a year I got 3*s.* Badder used to strap me some odd times. Some odd times he'd catch me over the head, but it was mostly on the back. He made me sing out. He has taken the billy-roller to me sometimes; about four times, I think. He used to take us over the shoulders with that; he would have done us an injury if he had struck us over the head. I never saw any one struck over the head with a billy-roller. He would strap us about twelve times at once. He used to strap us sometimes over the head. He used to strap us for letting his cards run through. I believe it was my fault. If we had had cardings to go on with we would have kept it from running through. It was nobody's fault that there were no cardings, only the slubber's fault that worked so hard. I have had, maybe, six stacks of cardings put up while he was out. When he came in, he would work harder to work down the stacks. Sometimes he would stop the card. He used to strap us most when he was working hardest. He did not strap us more at night than he did in the daytime. He would

sometimes stay half a day. When he was away, as soon as we had six stacks of cardings up, the rule was to stop, and then we'd pick up the waste about the room, and take a play sometimes, but very seldom. Mr. Ross paid me. Badder never paid me when he was out. I never got any money from Badder. I used sometimes to fall asleep. The boy next to me used often to fall asleep: John Breedon; he got many a stroke. That was when we were working for Castle; that would be about six o'clock. He was about the size of me; he was older than I was. They always strapped us if we fell asleep. Badder was a better master than Castle. Castle used to get a rope, about as thick as my thumb, and double it, and put knots in it, and lick us with that. That was a good bit worse than the strap. I was to no regular master afterward; I used to do bits about the room. I ran away because Thorpe used to come and strap me. He did not know what he was strapping me for; it was just as he was in his humours. I never saw such a man; he would strap any one as did not please him. I only worked for him a week or two. I didn't like it, and I ran away. He would strap me if even there was a bit of waste lying about the room. I have had marks on my back from Castle's strapping me.'"

In Nottingham, also, there is much cruelty shown in the treatment of the children, as will appear from the following evidence taken by Mr. Power:—

"Williamson, the father: 'My two sons, one ten, the other thirteen, work at Milnes's factory, at Lenton. They go at half-past five in the morning; don't stop at breakfast or tea-time. They stop at dinner half an hour. Come home at a quarter before ten. They used to work till ten, sometimes eleven, sometimes twelve. They earn between them 6*s.* 2*d.* per week. One of them, the eldest, worked at Wilson's for 2 years at 2*s.* 3*d.* a week. He left because the overlooker beat him and loosened a tooth for him. I complained, and they turned him away for it. They have been gone to work sixteen hours now; they will be very tired when they come home at half-past nine. I have a deal of trouble to get

'em up in the morning. I have been obliged to beat em with a strap in their shirts, and to pinch 'em, in order to get them well awake. It made me cry to be obliged to do it.'

"'Did you make them cry?' 'Yes, sometimes. They will be home soon, very tired, and you will see them.' I preferred walking toward the factory to meet them. I saw the youngest only, and asked him a few questions. He said, 'I'm sure I sha'n't stop to talk to you; I want to go home and get to bed; I must be up at half-past five again to-morrow morning.'

"G—— —— and A—— ——, examined. The boy: 'I am going fourteen: my sister is eleven. I have worked in Milnes's factory two years. She goes there also. We are both in the clearing-room. I think we work too long hours; I've been badly with it. We go at half-past five, give over at half-past nine. I'm now just come home. We sometimes stay till twelve. We are obliged to work over-hours. I have 4*s.* a week; that is, for staying from six till seven. They pay for over-hours besides. I asked to come away one night, lately, at eight o'clock, being ill; I was told if I went I must not come again. I am not well now. I can seldom eat any breakfast; my appetite is very bad. I have had a bad cold for a week.'

"Father: 'I believe him to be ill from being over-worked. My little girl came home the other, day cruelly beaten. I took her to Mr. Milnes; did not see him, but showed Mrs. Milnes the marks. I thought of taking it before a magistrate, but was advised to let it drop. They might have turned both my children away. That man's name is Blagg; he is always strapping the children. I sha'n't let the boy go to them much longer; I shall try to apprentice him; it's killing him by inches; he falls asleep over his food at night. I saw an account of such things in the newspaper, and thought how true it was of my own children.'

"Mother: 'I have worked in the same mills myself. The same man was there then. I have seen him behave shocking to the children. He would take 'em by the hair of the head and drag 'em about the room. He has been there twelve years. There's a many young ones in that hot room. There's six of them badly now, with bad eyes and sick-headache. This boy of ours has

alwas been delicate from a child. His appetite is very bad now; he does not eat his breakfast sometimes for two or three days together. The little girl bears it well; she is healthy. I should prefer their coming home at seven, without additional wages. The practice of working over-hours has been constantly pursued at Milnes's factory.'

"John Fortesque, at his own house, nine P. M. 'I am an overlooker in this factory. We have about one hundred hands. Forty quite children; most of the remainder are young women. Our regular day is from six to seven. It should be an hour for dinner, but it is only half an hour. I don't know how it comes so. We have had some bad men in authority who made themselves big; it is partly the master. No time is allowed for tea or breakfast; there used to be a quarter of an hour for each; it's altered now. We call it twelve hours a day. Over-time is paid for extra. When we are busy we work over-hours. Our present time is till half-past nine. It has been so all winter, and since to this time. We have some very young ones; as young as eight. I don't like to take them younger; they're not able to do our work. We have three doubling-rooms, a clearing-room, and a gassing-room. We have about forty in the clearing-room. We occasionally find it necessary to make a difference as to the time of keeping some of the children. We have done so several times. Master has said: Pick out the youngest, and let them go, and get some of the young women to take their places. I am not the overlooker to the clearing-room. Blagg is overlooker there; there has been many complaints against him. He's forced to be roughish in order to keep his place. If he did not keep the work going on properly there would be some one to take his place who would. There are some children so obstinate and bad they must be punished. A strap is used. Beating is necessary, on account of their being idle. We find it out often in this way: we give them the same number of bobbins each; when the number they ought to finish falls off, then they're corrected. They would try the patience of any man. It is not from being tired, I think. It happens as often in the middle of the day as at other times. I don't like the beating myself; I would rather there were little deductions in

their earnings for these offences. I am sure the children would not like to have any of their earnings stopped; I am sure they would mind it. From what I have heard parents say about their children when at work, I am sure they (the parents) would prefer this mode of correction; and, I think, it would have an effect on the children. At the factory of Messrs. Mills and Elliot they go on working all the night as well as day. I believe them to have done so for the last year and a half; they have left it off about a week. (*A respectable female here entered with a petition against negro-slavery; after she was gone, Mr. Fortesque continued.*) I think home slavery as bad as it can be abroad; worst of anywhere in the factories. The hours we work are much too long for young people. Twelve hours' work is enough for young or old, confined in a close place. The work is light, but it's standing so long that tires them. I have been here about two years; I have seen bad effects produced on people's health by it, but not to any great degree. It must be much worse at Mills and Elliot's; working night as well as day, the rooms are never clear of people's breaths. We set our windows open when we turn the hands out. The gas, too, which they use at night, makes it worse.'"

The italicised parenthesis is, *bonâ fide*, a part of the Report, as may be proved by consulting the parliamentary document. The *respectable female* was probably the original of Dickens's Mrs. Jellaby.

Read these references to a case of barbarity in a factory at Wigan:—

*Extract from a speech made by Mr. Grant, a Manchester spinner, at a meeting held at Chorlton-upon-Medlock; reported in the Manchester Courier of 20th April*, 1833.

"Much was said of the black slaves and their chains. No doubt they were entitled to freedom, but were there no slaves except those of sable hue? Has slavery no sort of existence among children of the factories? Yes, and chains were some-

times introduced, though those chains might not be forged of iron. He would name an instance of this kind of slavery, which took place at Wigan. A child, not ten years of age, having been late at the factory one morning, had, as a punishment, a rope put round its neck, to which a weight of twenty pounds was attached; and, thus burdened like a galley-slave, it was compelled to labour for a length of time in the midst of an impure atmosphere and a heated room. [Loud cries of, Shame!] The truth of this has been denied by Mr. Richard Potter, the member for Wigan; but he (the speaker) reiterated its correctness. He has seen the child; and its mother's eyes were filled with tears while she told him this shocking tale of infant suffering."

*Extract from a speech made by Mr. Oastler, on the occasion of a meeting at the City of London Tavern; reported in the Times, of the 25th of February*, 1833.

"In a mill at Wigan, the children, for any slight neglect, were loaded with weights of twenty pounds, passed over their shoulders and hanging behind their backs. Then there was a murderous instrument called a billy-roller, about eight feet long and one inch and a half in diameter, with which many children had been knocked down, and in some instances murdered by it."

*Extract from a speech made by Mr. Oastler, at a meeting held in the theatre at Bolton, and reported in the Bolton Chronicle, of the 30th of March*, 1833.

"In one factory they have a door which covers a quantity of cold water, in which they plunge the sleepy victim to awake it. In Wigan they tie a great weight to their backs. I knew the Russians made the Poles carry iron weights in their exile to Siberia, but it was reserved for Christian England thus to use an infant."

Rowland Detroiser deposed before the Central Board of Commissioners, concerning the treatment of children in the cotton factories:—

"'The children employed in a cotton-factory labour, are not all under the control or employed by the proprietor. A very considerable number is employed and paid by the spinners and stretchers, when there are stretchers. These are what are called piecers and scavengers; the youngest children being employed in the latter capacity, and as they grow up, for a time in the scavengers and piecers. In coarse mills, that is, mills in which low numbers of yarn are spun, the wages of the scavengers is commonly from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.*, according to size and ability. The men do not practise the system of fining, generally speaking, and especially toward these children. The sum which they earn is so small it would be considered by many a shame to make it less. They do not, however, scruple to give them a good bobbying, as it is called; that is, beating them with a rope thickened at one end, or, in some few brutal instances, with the combined weapons of fist and foot.'

"'But this severity, you say, is practised toward the children who are employed by the men, and not employed by the masters?' 'Yes.'

"'And the men inflict the punishment?' 'Yes.'

"'Not the overlookers?' 'Not in these instances.'

"'But how do you reconcile your statement with the fact that the men have been the principal complainers of the cruelties practised toward the children, and also the parties who are most active in endeavouring to obtain for the children legislative protection?' 'My statement is only fact. I do not profess to reconcile the apparent inconsistency. The men are in some measure forced by circumstances into the practice of that severity of which I have spoken.'

"'Will you explain these circumstances?' 'The great object in a cotton mill is to turn as much work off as possible, in order to compensate by quantity for the smallness of the profit. To that end every thing is made subservient. There are two classes of superintendents in those establishments. The first class are what are called managers, from their great power and authority. Their especial business is to watch over the whole concern, and constantly to attend to the quantity and quality of the yarn, &c.

turned off. To these individuals the second class, called overlookers, are immediately responsible for whatever is amiss. The business of overlookers is to attend to particular rooms and classes of hands, for the individual conduct of which they are held responsible. These individuals, in some mills, are paid in proportion to the quantity of work turned off; in all, they are made responsible for that quantity, as well as for the quality; and as the speed of each particular machine is known, nothing is more easy than to calculate the quantity which it ought to produce. This quantity is the maximum; the minimum allowed is the least possible deficiency, certain contingencies being taken into account. In those mills in which the overlookers are paid in proportion to the quantity of work turned off, interest secures the closest attention to the conduct of every individual under them; and in other mills, fear of losing their places operates to produce the same effect. It is one continual system of driving; and, in order to turn off as great a quantity of work as is possible, the manager drives the overlookers, and the overlookers drive the men. Every spinner knows that he must turn off the average quantity of work which his wheels are capable of producing, or lose his place if deficiencies are often repeated; and consequently, the piecers and scavengers are drilled, in their turns, to the severest attention. On their constant attention, as well as his own, depends the quantity of work done. So that it is not an exaggeration to say, that their powers of labour are subjected to the severity of an undeviating exaction. A working man is estimated in these establishments in proportion to his physical capacity rather than his moral character, and therefore it is not difficult to infer what must be the consequences. It begets a system of debasing tyranny in almost every department, the most demoralizing in its effects. Kind words are godsends in many cotton factories, and oaths and blows the usual order of the day. The carder must produce the required quantity of drawing and roving; the spinner, the required quantity of yarn; a system of overbearing tyranny is adopted toward everybody under them; they are cursed into the required degree of attention, and blows are resorted to with the children when oaths fail, and sometimes

even before an oath has been tried. In short, the men must do work enough, or lose their places. It is a question between losing their places and the exercise of severity of discipline in all cases; between starvation and positive cruelty, in many. There are exceptions, but my conviction is that they are comparatively few indeed. To me the whole system has always appeared one of tyranny."

Mr. Abraham Whitehead, clothier, of Scholes, near Holmfirth, examined by Parliamentary Committee:—

"'What has been the treatment which you have observed that these children have received at the mills, to keep them attentive for so many hours, at so early ages?' 'They are generally cruelly treated; so cruelly treated that they dare not, hardly for their lives, be too late at their work in the morning. When I have been at the mills in the winter season, when the children are at work in the evening, the very first thing they inquire is, "What o'clock is it?" If we should answer, "Seven," they say, "Only seven! it is a great while to ten, but we must not give up till ten o'clock, or past." They look so anxious to know what o'clock it is that I am convinced the children are fatigued, and think that, even at seven, they have worked too long. My heart has been ready to bleed for them when I have seen them so fatigued, for they appear in such a state of apathy and insensibility as really not to know whether they are doing their work or not. They usually throw a bunch of ten or twelve cordings across the hand, and take one off at a time; but I have seen the bunch entirely finished, and they have attempted to take off another, when they have not had a cording at all; they have been so fatigued as not to know whether they were at work or not.'

"'Do they frequently fall into errors and mistakes in piecing when thus fatigued?' 'Yes; the errors they make when thus fatigued are, that instead of placing the cording in this way, (describing it,) they are apt to place them obliquely, and that causes a flying, which makes bad yarn; and when the billy-spinner sees that, he takes his strap, or the billy-roller, and says,

"Damn thee, close it; little devil, close it;" and they strike the child with the strap or billy roller.'

"'You have noticed this in the after part of the day more particularly?' 'It is a very difficult thing to go into a mill in the latter part of the day, particularly in winter, and not to hear some of the children crying for being beaten for this very fault.'

"'How are they beaten?' 'That depends on the humanity of the slubber or billy-spinner. Some have been beaten so violently that they have lost their lives in consequence of being so beaten; and even a young girl has had the end of a billy-roller jammed through her cheek.'

"'What is the billy-roller?' 'A heavy rod of from two to three yards long, and of two inches in diameter, and with an iron pivot at each end. It runs on the top of the cording, over the feeding-cloth. I have seen them take the billy-roller and rap them on the head, making their heads crack so that you might have heard the blow at a distance of six or eight yards, in spite of the din and rolling of the machinery. Many have been knocked down by the instrument. I knew a boy very well, of the name of Senior, with whom I went to school; he was struck with a billy-roller on the elbow; it occasioned a swelling; he was not able to work more than three or four weeks after the blow; and he died in consequence. There was a woman in Holmfirth who was beaten very much: I am not quite certain whether on the head; and she lost her life in consequence of being beaten with a billy-roller. That which was produced (showing one) is not the largest size; there are some a foot longer than that; it is the most common instrument with which these poor little pieceners are beaten, more commonly than with either stick or strap.'

"'How is it detached from the machinery?' 'Supposing this to be the billy-frame, (describing it,) at each end there is a socket open; the cording runs underneath here, just in this way, and when the billy-spinner is angry, and sees the little piecener has done wrong, he takes off this and says, "Damn thee, close it."'

"'You have seen the poor children in this situation?' 'I have seen them frequently struck with the billy-roller; I have seen

one so struck as to occasion its death; but I once saw a piecener struck in the face by a billy-spinner with his hand, until its nose bled very much; and when I said, "Oh dear, I would not suffer a child of mine to be treated thus," the man has said "How the devil do you know but what he deserved it? What have you to do with it?" '"

But the most complete evidence in regard to the slavery in the factories was that given to the Parliamentary Committee, by a man named Peter Smart, whose experience and observation as a slave and a slave-driver in the factories of Scotland, enabled him to substantiate all the charges made against the system. His history possesses the deepest interest, and should be attentively perused:—

"'Where do you reside?' 'At Dundee.'

"'What age are you?' 'Twenty-seven.'

"'What is your business?' 'An overseer of a flax-mill.'

"'Have you worked in a mill from your youth?' 'Yes, since I was five years of age.'

"'Had you a father and mother in the country at that time?' 'My mother stopped in Perth, about eleven miles from the mill, and my father was in the army.'

"'Were you hired for any length of time when you went?' 'Yes, my mother got 15*s.* for six years, I having my meat and clothes.'

"'At whose mill?' 'Mr. Andrew Smith's, at Gateside.'

"'Is that in Fifeshire?' 'Yes.'

"'What were your hours of labour, do you recollect, in that mill?' 'In the summer season we were very scarce of water.'

"'But when you had sufficient water, how long did you work?' 'We began at four o'clock in the morning, and worked till ten or eleven at night; as long as we could stand upon our feet.'

"'You hardly could keep up for that length of time?' 'No, we often fell asleep.'

"'How were you kept to your work for that length of time; were you chastised?' 'Yes, very often, and very severely.'

"'How long was this ago?' 'It is between twenty-one and twenty-two years since I first went.'

"'Were you kept in the premises constantly?' 'Constantly.'

"'Locked up?' 'Yes, locked up.'

"'Night and day?' 'Night and day; I never went home while I was at the mill.'

"'Was it possible to keep up your activity for such a length of time as that?' 'No, it was impossible to do it; we often fell asleep.'

"'Were not accidents then frequently occurring at that mill from over-fatigue?' 'Yes, I got my hands injured there by the machinery.'

"'Have you lost any of your fingers?' 'Yes, I have lost one, and the other hand is very much injured.'

"'At what time of the night was that when your hands became thus injured?' 'Twilight, between seven and eight o'clock.'

"'Do you attribute that accident to over-fatigue and drowsiness?' 'Yes, and to a want of knowledge of the machinery. I was only five years old when I went to the mills, and I did not know the use of the different parts of the machinery.'

"'Did you ever know any other accident happen in that mill?' 'Yes, there was a girl that fell off her stool when she was piecing; she fell down and was killed on the spot.'

"'Was that considered by the hands in the mill to have been occasioned by drowsiness and excessive fatigue?' 'Yes.'

"'How old were you at the time this took place?' 'I don't know, for I have been so long in the mills that I have got no education, and I have forgot the like of those things.'

"'Have you any recollection of what the opinions of the people in the mill were at that time as to the cause of the accident?' 'I heard the rest of them talking about it, and they said that it was so. We had long stools that we sat upon then, old-fashioned; we have no such things as those now.'

"'Is that the only accident that you have known to happen in that mill?' 'There was a boy, shortly before I got my fingers hurt, that had his fingers hurt in the same way that I had.'

"'Was there any other killed?' 'There was one killed, but I could not say how it was; but she was killed in the machinery.'

"'Has any accident happened in that mill during the last twelve years?' 'I could not say; it is twelve years since I left it.'

"'Is that mill going on still?' 'Yes.'

"'Speaking of the hours that you had to labour there, will you state to this committee the effect it had upon you?' 'It had a very great effect upon me; I was bad in my health.'

"'Were you frequently much beaten, in order to keep you up to your labour?' 'Yes; very often beat till I was bloody at the mouth and at the nose, by the overseer and master too.'

"'How did they beat you?' 'With their hands and with a leather thong.'

"'Were the children, generally speaking, treated as you have stated you were?' 'Yes; generally; there are generally fifteen boys in one, and a number of girls in the other; they were kept separately.'

"'You say you were locked up night and day?' 'Yes.'

"'Do the children ever attempt to run away?' 'Very often.'

"'Were they pursued and brought back again?' 'Yes, the overseer pursued them, and brought them back.'

"'Did you ever attempt to run away?' 'Yes, I ran away twice.'

"'And you were brought back?' 'Yes; and I was sent up to the master's loft, and threshed with a whip for running away.'

"'Were you bound to this man?' 'Yes, for six years.'

"'By whom were you bound?' 'My mother got 15*s.* for the six years.'

"'Do you know whether the children were, in point of fact, compelled to stop during the whole time for which they were engaged?' 'Yes, they were.'

"'By law?' 'I cannot say by law; but they were compelled by the master; I never saw any law used there but the law of their own hands.'

"'Does that practice of binding continue in Scotland now?' 'Not in the place I am in.'

"'How long since it has ceased?' 'For the last two years there has been no engagement in Dundee.'

"'Are they generally engagements from week to week, or from month to month?' 'From month to month.'

"'Do you know whether a practice has prevailed of sending poor children, who are orphans, from workhouses and hospitals to that work?' 'There were fifteen, at the time I was there, came from Edinburgh Poorhouse.'

"'Do you know what the Poorhouse in Edinburgh is?' 'It is just a house for putting poor orphans in.'

"'Do you know the name of that establishment?' 'No.'

"'Do you happen to know that these fifteen came to the mill from an establishment for the reception of poor orphans?' 'Yes.'

"'How many had you at the mill?' 'Fifteen.'

"'At what ages?' 'From 12 to 15.'

"'Were they treated in a similar manner to yourself?' 'Yes, we were all treated alike; there was one treatment for all, from the oldest to the youngest.'

"'Did not some of you attempt, not merely to get out of the mill, but out of the country?' 'Yes; I have known some go down to the boat at Dundee, in order to escape by that means, and the overseer has caught them there, and brought them back again.'

"'Is there not a ferry there?' Yes.'

"'When persons disembark there, they may embark on the ferry?' 'Yes.'

"'Did your parents live in Dundee at this time?' 'No.'

"'Had you any friends at Dundee?' 'No.'

"'The fact is, that you had nobody that could protect you?' 'No, I had no protection; the first three years I was at the mill I never saw my mother at all; and when I got this accident with my hand she never knew of it.'

"'Where did she reside at that time?' 'At Perth.'

"'You say that your master himself was in the habit of treating you in the way you have mentioned?' 'Yes.'

"'Describe what the treatment was?' 'The treatment was

very bad; perhaps a box on the ear, or very frequently a kick with his foot.'

"'Were you punished for falling asleep in that mill?' 'Yes, I have got my licks for it, and been punished very severely for it.'

"'Where did you go to then?' 'I went to a mill in Argyleshire.'

"'How many years were you in this mill of Mr. Andrew Smith's, of Gateside?' 'Eleven years.'

"'What age were you, when you went to this mill in Argyleshire?' 'About 16.'

"'You stated that you were bound to stay with Mr. Smith for six years; how came you then to continue with him the remaining five years?' 'At the end of those six years I got 3*l.* a year from my master, and found my own clothes out of that.'

"'Were you then contented with your situation?' 'No, I cannot say that I was; but I did not know any thing of any other business.'

"'You had not been instructed in any other business, and you did not know where you could apply for a maintenance?' 'No.'

"'To whose mill did you then remove?' 'To Messrs. Duff, Taylor & Co., at Ruthven, Forfarshire.'

"'What were your hours of labour there?' 'Fourteen hours.'

"'Exclusive of the time for meals and refreshment?' 'Yes.'

"'Was that a flax mill?' 'Yes.'

"'Did you work for that number of hours both winter and summer?' 'Yes, both winter and summer.'

"'How old were you at this time?' 'Sixteen.'

"'Are you aware whether any increase was made in the number of hours of work, in the year 1819, by an agreement between the masters and the workmen?' 'No, I cannot say as to that.'

"'You think there could not be much increase of your previous labour, whatever agreement might have been made upon the subject?' 'No, there could have been no increase made to that; it was too long for that.'

"'Were the hands chastised up to their labour in that mill?' 'Yes.'

"'That was the practice there also?' 'Yes.'

"'Do you mean to state that you were treated with great cruelty at the age of 16, and that you still remain in the mill?' 'I was not beaten so severely as I was in Fifeshire.'

"'You were not so beaten as to induce you to leave that mill?' 'If I had left it, I did not know where to go.'

"'Did you try to get into any other occupation?' 'Yes, I went apprentice to a flax-dresser at that time.'

"'What was the reason that you did not keep at it?' 'My hand was so disabled, that it was found I was not able to follow that business.'

"'You found you could not get your bread at that business?' 'Yes.'

"'Consequently, you were obliged to go back to the mills?' 'Yes.'

"'Was it the custom, when you were 16 years of age, for the overseer to beat you?' 'Yes, the boys were often beaten very severely in the mill.'

"'At this time you were hired for wages; how much had you?' 'Half-a-crown a week.'

"'And your maintenance?' 'No, I maintained myself.'

"'Is not that much lower than the wages now given to people of sixteen years of age?' 'I have a boy about sixteen that has 4*s*. 6*d*. a week, but he is in a high situation; he is oiler of the machinery.'

"'Besides, you have been injured in your hand by the accident to which you have alluded, and that probably might have interfered with the amount of your wages?' 'Yes.'

"'What duty had you in the mill at this time, for the performance of which you received 2*s*. 6*d*. a week, when you were at Duff, Taylor & Co.'s?' 'I was a card-feeder.'

"'Did your hand prevent you working at that time as well as other boys of the same age, in feeding the cards?' 'Yes, on the old system; I was not able to feed with a stick at that time; it is done away with now.'

"'How long did you stay there?' 'About fifteen months.'

"'How many hours did you work there?' 'Fourteen.'

"'Do you mean that you worked fourteen hours actual labour?' 'Yes.'

"'Was it a water-mill?' 'Yes.'

"'Were you ever short of water?' 'We had plenty of water.'

"'How long did you stop for dinner?' 'Half an hour.'

"'What time had you for breakfast, or for refreshment in the afternoon?' 'We had no time for that.'

"'Did you eat your breakfast and dinner in the mill then?' 'No, we went to the victualling house.'

"'Was that some building attached to the mill?' 'Yes, at a a small distance from the mill.'

"'Was it provided for the purpose of the mill?' 'Yes, we got our bread and water there.'

"'Did you sleep in a bothy at Duff & Taylor's?' 'Yes.'

"'Were you locked up in a bothy?' 'No.'

"'What is a bothy?' 'It is a house with beds all round.'

"'Is it not the practice for farm-servants, and others, who are unmarried, to sleep in such places?' 'I could not say as to that; I am not acquainted with the farm system.'

"'To what mill did you next go?' 'To Mr. Webster's, at Battus Den, within eleven miles of Dundee.'

"'In what situation did you act there?' 'I acted as an overseer.'

"'At 17 years of age?' 'Yes.'

"'Did you inflict the same punishment that you yourself had experienced?' 'I went as an overseer; not as a slave, but as a slave-driver.'

"'What were the hours of labour in that mill?' 'My master told me that I had to produce a certain quantity of yarn; the hours were at that time fourteen; I said that I was not able to produce the quantity of yarn that was required; I told him if he took the timepiece out of the mill I would produce that quantity, and after that time I found no difficulty in producing the quantity.'

"'How long have you worked per day in order to produce the quantity your master required?' 'I have wrought nineteen hours.'

"'Was this a water-mill?' 'Yes, water and steam both.'

"'To what time have you worked?' 'I have seen the mill going till it was past 12 o'clock on the Saturday night.'

"'So that the mill was still working on the Sabbath morning.' 'Yes.'

"'Were the workmen paid by the piece, or by the day?' 'No, all had stated wages.'

"'Did not that almost compel you to use great severity to the hands then under you?' 'Yes; I was compelled often to beat them, in order to get them to attend to their work, from their being overwrought.'

"'Were not the children exceedingly fatigued at that time?' 'Yes, exceedingly fatigued.'

"'Were the children bound in the same way in that mill?' 'No; they were bound from one year's end to another, for twelve months.'

"'Did you keep the hands locked up in the same way in that mill?' 'Yes, we locked up the mill; but we did not lock the bothy.'

"'Did you find that the children were unable to pursue their labour properly to that extent?' 'Yes; they have been brought to that condition, that I have gone and fetched up the doctor to them, to see what was the matter with them, and to know whether they were able to rise, or not able to rise; they were not at all able to rise; we have had great difficulty in getting them up.'

"'When that was the case, how long have they been in bed, generally speaking?' 'Perhaps not above four or five hours in their beds. Sometimes we were very ill-plagued by men coming about the females' bothy.'

"'Were your hands principally girls?' 'Girls and boys all together; we had only a very few boys.'

"'Did the boys sleep in the girls' bothy?' 'Yes, all together.'

"'Do you mean to say that there was only one bothy for the girls and for the boys who worked there?' 'Yes.'

"'What age were those girls and boys?' 'We had them from 8 to 20 years of age; and the boys were from 10 to 14, or thereabouts.'

"'You spoke of men who came about the bothy; did the girls expect them?' 'Yes; of course they had their sweethearts.'

"'Did they go into the bothy?' 'Yes; and once I got a sore beating from one of them, for ordering him out of the bothy.'

"'How long were you in that mill?' 'Three years and nine months.'

"'And where did you go to next?' 'To Messrs. Anderson & Company, at Moneyfieth, about six miles from Dundee.'

"'What were your hours of labour there?' 'Fifteen hours.'

"'Exclusive of the hour for refreshment?' 'Yes; we seldom stopped for refreshment there.'

"'You worked without any intermission at all, frequently?' 'Yes; we made a turn-about.'

"'Explain what you mean by a turn-about?' 'We let them out by turns in the days.'

"'How long did you let one go out?' 'Just as short a time as they could have to take their victuals in.'

"'What were the ages of the children principally employed in that place?' 'From about 12 to 20; they were all girls that I had there, except one boy, and I think he was 8 years of age.'

"'Was this a flax-mill?' 'Yes, all flax.'

"'Did you find that the children there were exceedingly distressed with their work?' 'Yes; for the mill being in the country, we were very scarce of workers, and the master often came out and compelled them by flattery to go and work half the night after their day's labour, and then they had only the other half to sleep.'

"'You mean that the master induced them by offering them extra wages to go to work half the night?' 'Yes.'

"'Was that very prejudicial to the girls so employed?' 'Yes; I have seen some girls that were working half the night, that have fainted and fallen down at their work, and have had to be carried out.'

"'Did you use severity in that mill?' 'No, I was not very severe there.'

"'You find, perhaps, that the girls do not require that severity that the boys do?' 'Yes.'

"'How large was that mill?' 'There were only eighteen of us altogether.'

"'From what you have seen, should you say that the treatment of the children and the hours of labour are worse in the small or in the large mills?' 'I could not answer that question.'

"'Have you ever been in any large mill?' 'Yes, I am in one just now, Mr. Baxter's.'

"'Is the treatment of the children better in that large mill than in the smaller mills in which you have been usually?' 'There is little difference; the treatment is all one.'

"'To whose mill did you next go?' 'To Messrs. Baxter & Brothers, at Dundee.'

"'State the hours of labour which you worked when you were there, when trade was brisk?' 'Thirteen hours and twenty minutes.'

"'What time was allowed for meals?' 'Fifty minutes each day.'

"'Have you found that the system is getting any better now?' 'No, the system is getting no better with us.'

"'Is there as much beating as there was?' 'There is not so much in the licking way.'

"'But it is not entirely abolished, the system of chastisement?' 'No, it is far from that.'

"'Do you think that, where young children are employed, that system ought, or can be, entirely dispensed with, of giving some chastisement to the children of that age?' 'They would not require chastisement if they had shorter daily work.'

"'Do you mean to state that they are only chastised because through weariness they are unable to attend to their work, and that they are not chastised for other faults and carelessness as well?' 'There may be other causes besides, but weariness is the principal fault.'

"'Does not that over-labour induce that weariness and incapacity to do the work, which brings upon them chastisement at other parts of the day as well as in the evening?' 'Yes; young girls, if their work go wrong, if they see me going round, and my countenance with the least frown upon it, they will begin crying when I go by.'

"'Then they live in a state of perpetual alarm and suffering?' 'Yes.'

"'Do you think that those children are healthy?' 'No, they are far from that; I have two girls that have been under me these two years; the one is 13 years, the other 15, and they are both orphans and sisters, and both one size, and they very seldom are working together, because the one or the other is generally ill; and they are working for 3*s.* 6*d.* a week.'

"'Have you the same system of locking up now?' 'Yes, locking up all day.'

"'Are they locked up at night?' 'No; after they have left their work we have nothing more to do with them.'

"'What time do they leave their work in the evening now?' 'About 20 minutes past 7.'

"'What time do they go to it in the morning?' 'Five minutes before 5.'

"'Do you conceive that that is at all consistent with the health of those children?' 'It is certainly very greatly against their health.'

"'Is not the flax-spinning business in itself very unwholesome?' 'Very unwholesome.'

So much for the slavery of the factories—a slavery which destroys human beings, body and soul. The fate of the helpless children condemned to such protracted, exhausting toil, under such demoralizing influences, with the lash constantly impending over them, and no alternative but starvation, is enough to excite the tears of all humane persons. That such a system should be tolerated in a land where a Christian church is a part of the government, is indeed remarkable—proving how greatly men are disinclined to practise what they profess.

We cannot close this chapter upon the British factories without making a quotation from a work which, we fear, has been too little read in the United Kingdom —a fiction merely in construction, a truthful narrative in fact. We allude to "The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy," by Frances Trollope. Copious editions of this heart-rending story should be immediately issued by the British publishers. This passage, describing the visit of Michael Armstrong to the cotton factory, in company with Sir Matthew Dowling and Dr. Crockley, is drawn to the life:—

"The party entered the building, whence—as all know who have done the like—every sight, every sound, every scent that kind nature has fitted to the organs of her children, so as to render the mere unfettered use of them a delight, are banished for ever and for ever. The ceaseless whirring of a million hissing wheels seizes on the tortured ear; and while threatening to destroy the delicate sense, seems bent on proving first, with a sort of mocking mercy, of how much suffering it can be the cause. The scents that reek around, from oil, tainted water, and human filth, with that last worst nausea arising from the hot refuse of atmospheric air, left by some hundred pairs of labouring lungs, render the act of breathing a process of difficulty, disgust, and pain. All this is terrible. But what the eye brings home to the heart of those who look round upon the horrid earthly hell, is enough to make it all forgotten; for who can think of villanous smells, or heed the suffering of the ear-racking sounds, while they look upon hundreds of helpless children, divested of every trace of health, of joyousness, and even of youth! Assuredly there is no exaggeration in this; for except only in their diminutive size, these suffering infants have no trace of it. Lean and

distorted limbs, sallow and sunken cheeks, dim hollow eyes, that speak unrest and most unnatural carefulness, give to each tiny, trembling, unelastic form, a look of hideous premature old age.

"But in the room they entered, the dirty, ragged, miserable crew were all in active performance of their various tasks; the overlookers, strap in hand, on the alert; the whirling spindles urging the little slaves who waited on them to movements as unceasing as their own; and the whole monstrous chamber redolent of all the various impurities that 'by the perfection of our manufacturing system' are converted into 'gales of Araby' for the rich, after passing, in the shape of certain poison, through the lungs of the poor. So Sir Matthew proudly looked about him and approved; and though it was athwart that species of haughty frown in which such dignity as his is apt to clothe itself, Dr. Crockley failed not to perceive that his friend and patron was in good humour, and likely to be pleased by any light and lively jestings in which he might indulge. Perceiving, therefore, that little Michael passed on with downcast eyes, unrecognised by any, he wrote upon a slip of paper, for he knew his voice could not be heard—'Make the boy take that bare-legged scavenger wench round the neck, and give her a kiss while she is next lying down, and let us see them sprawling together.'

"Sir Matthew read the scroll, and grinned applause.

"The miserable creature to whom the facetious doctor pointed, was a little girl about seven years old, whose office as 'scavenger' was to collect incessantly, from the machinery and from the floor, the flying fragments of cotton that might impede the work. In the performance of this duty, the child was obliged, from time to time, to stretch itself with sudden quickness on the ground, while the hissing machinery passed over her; and when this is skilfully done, and the head, body, and outstretched limbs carefully glued to the floor, the steady-moving but threatening mass may pass and repass over the dizzy head and trembling body without touching it. But accidents frequently occur; and many are the flaxen locks rudely torn from infant heads, in the process.

"It was a sort of vague hope that something comical of this kind

might occur, which induced Dr. Crockley to propose this frolic to his friend, and probably the same idea suggested itself to Sir Matthew likewise.

"'I say, Master Michael!' vociferated the knight, in a scream which successfully struggled with the din, 'show your old acquaintance that pride has not got the upper hand of you in your fine clothes. Take scavenger No. 3, there, round the neck; now—now—now, as she lies sprawling, and let us see you give her a hearty kiss.'

"The stern and steady machinery moved onward, passing over the body of the little girl, who owed her safety to the miserable leanness of her shrunken frame; but Michael moved not.

"'Are you deaf, you little vermin?' roared Sir Matthew. 'Now she's down again. Do what I bid you, or, by the living God, you shall smart for it!'

"Still Michael did not stir, neither did he speak; or if he did, his young voice was wholly inaudible, and the anger of Sir Matthew was demonstrated by a clenched fist and threatening brow. 'Where the devil is Parsons?' he demanded, in accents that poor Michael both heard and understood. 'Fine as he is, the strap will do him good.'

"In saying this, the great man turned to reconnoitre the space he had traversed, and by which his confidential servant must approach, and found that he was already within a good yard of him.

"'That's good—I want you, Parsons. Do you see this little rebel here, that I have dressed and treated like one of my own children? What d'ye think of his refusing to kiss Miss No. 3, scavenger, when I bid him?'

"'The devil he does?' said the manager, grinning: 'we must see if we can't mend that. Mind your hits, Master Piecer, and salute the young lady when the mules go back, like a gentleman.'

"Sir Matthew perceived that his favourite agent feared to enforce his first brutal command, and was forced, therefore, to content himself with seeing the oiled and grimy face of the filthy little girl in contact with that of the now clean and delicate-looking

Michael. But he felt he had been foiled, and cast a glance upon his *protégé*, which seemed to promise that he would not forget it."

Nor is the delineation, in the following verses, by Francis M. Blake, less truthful and touching:—

## THE FACTORY CHILD.

Early one winter's morning,
The weather wet and wild,
Some hours before the dawning,
A father call'd his child;
Her daily morsel bringing,
The darksome room he paced,
And cried, "The bell is ringing—
My hapless darling, haste."

"Father, I'm up, but weary,
I scarce can reach the door,
And long the way and dreary—
Oh, carry me once more!
To help us we've no mother,
To live how hard we try—
They kill'd my little brother—
Like him I'll work and die!"

His feeble arms they bore her,
The storm was loud and wild—
God of the poor man, hear him!
He prays, "Oh, save my child!"
Her wasted form seem'd nothing—
The load was in his heart;
The sufferer he kept soothing,
Till at the mill they part.

The overlooker met her,
As to the frame she crept,
And with the thong he beat her,
And cursed her as she wept.
Alas! what hours of horror
Made up her latest day!
In toil, and pain, and sorrow,
They slowly pass'd away.

It seem'd, as she grew weaker,
The threads the oftener broke,
The rapid wheels ran quicker,
And heavier fell the stroke.
The sun had long descended,
But night brought no repose:
*Her* day began and ended
As her taskmasters chose.

Then to her little neighbour
Her only cent she paid,
To take her last hour's labour,
While by her frame she laid.
At last, the engine ceasing,
The captives homeward flee,
One thought her strength increasing—
Her parent soon to see.

She left, but oft she tarried,
She fell, and rose no more,
But by her comrades carried,
She reach'd her father's door.
All night with tortured feeling,
He watch'd his speechless child;
While close beside her kneeling,
She knew him not, nor smiled.

Again the loud bell's ringing,
Her last perceptions tried,
When, from her straw bed springing,
"'Tis time!" she shriek'd, and—died.
That night a chariot pass'd her,
While on the ground she lay,
The daughters of her master
An evening visit pay;
Their tender hearts were sighing,
As negro wrongs were told,
While the white slave was dying,
Who gain'd their father's gold!

## CHAPTER IV.

### SLAVERY IN THE BRITISH WORKSHOPS.

WHEN Captain Hugh Clapperton, the celebrated English traveller, visited Bello, the sultan of the Felatahs, at Sackatoo, he made the monarch some presents, in the name of his majesty the king of England. These were—two new blunderbusses, a pair of double-barrelled pistols, a pocket compass, an embroidered jacket, a scarlet bornonse, a pair of scarlet breeches, thirty-four yards of silk, two turban shawls, four pounds of cloves, four pounds of cinnamon, three cases of gunpowder with shot and balls, three razors, three clasp-knives, three looking-glasses, six snuff-boxes, a spy-glass, and a large tea-tray. The sultan said—"Every thing is wonderful, but you are the greatest curiosity of all!" and then added, "What can I give that is most acceptable to the king of England?" Clapperton replied—"The most acceptable service you can render to the king of England is to co-operate with his majesty in putting a stop to the slave-trade on the coast, as the king of England sends large ships to cruise there, for the sole purpose of seizing all vessels

engaged in this trade, whose crews are thrown into prison, and of liberating the unfortunate slaves, on whom lands and houses are conferred, at one of our settlements in Africa." "What!" exclaimed the sultan, "have you no slaves in England?" "No: whenever a slave sets his foot in England, he is from that moment free," replied Clapperton. "What do you then do for servants?" inquired the sultan. "We hire them for a stated period, and give them regular wages; nor is any person in England allowed to strike another; and the very soldiers are fed, clothed, and paid by the government," replied the English captain. "God is great!" exclaimed the sultan. "You are a beautiful people." Clapperton had succeeded in putting a beautiful illusion upon the sultan's imagination, as some English writers have endeavoured to do among the civilized nations of the earth. If the sultan had been taken to England, to see the freedom of the "servants" in the workshops, perhaps he would have exclaimed—"God is great! Slaves are plenty."

The condition of the apprentices in the British workshops is at least as bad as that of the children in the factories. According to the second report of the commissioners appointed by Parliament, the degrading system of involuntary apprenticeship—in many cases without the consent of parents—and merely according to the regulations of the brutal guardians of the workhouses, is general. The commissioners say—

"That in some trades, those especially requiring skilled workmen, these apprentices are bound by legal indentures, usually at the age of fourteen, and for a term of seven years, the age being rarely younger, and the period of servitude very seldom longer; but by far the greater number are bound *without any prescribed legal forms*, and in almost all these cases they are required to serve their masters, *at whatever age they may commence their apprenticeship, until they attain the age of twenty-one*, in some instances in employments in which there is nothing deserving the name of skill to be acquired, and in other instances in employments in which they are taught to make only one particular part of the article manufactured: *so that at the end of their servitude they are altogether unable to make any one article of their trade in a complete state.* That a large proportion of these apprentices consist of orphans, or are the children of widows, or belong to the very poorest families, and frequently are apprenticed by boards of guardians.

"That in these districts it is common for parents to borrow money of the employers, and to stipulate, by express agreement, to repay it from their children's wages; a practice which prevails likewise in Birmingham and Warrington: in most other places no evidence was discovered of its existence."—*Second Report of the Commissioners*, p. 195, 196.

Here we have a fearful text on which to comment. In these few sentences we see the disclosure of a system which, if followed out and abused, must produce a state of slavery of the very worst and most oppressive character. To show that it *is* thus abused, here are some extracts from the Reports on the Wolverhampton district, to which the Central Board of Commissioners direct special attention:—

"The peculiar trade of the Wolverhampton district, with the exception of a very few large proprietors, is in the hands of a

great number of small masters, who are personally known only to some of the foremen of the factors to whom they take their work, and scarcely one of whom is sufficiently important to have his name over his door or his workshop in front of a street. In the town of Wolverhampton alone there are of these small masters, for example, two hundred and sixty locksmiths, sixty or seventy key-makers, from twenty to thirty screw-makers, and a like number of latch, bolt, snuffer, tobacco-box, and spectacle frame and case makers. Each of these small masters, if they have not children of their own, generally employ from one to three apprentices."—*Horne, Report;* App. pt. ii. p. 2. s. 13 et seq.

The workshops of the small masters are usually of the dirtiest, most dilapidated, and confined description, and situated in the most filthy and undrained localities, at the back of their wretched abodes.

"There are two modes of obtaining apprentices in this district, namely, the legal one of application to magistrates or boards of guardians for sanction of indentures; and, secondly, the illegal mode of taking the children to be bound by an attorney, without any such reference to the proper authorities. There are many more bound by this illegal mode than by the former.

"In all cases, the children, of whatever age, are bound till they attain the age of twenty-one years. If the child be only seven years of age, the period of servitude remains the same, however simple the process or nature of the trade to be learnt. During the first year or two, if the apprentice be very young, he is merely used to run errands, do dirty household work, nurse infants, &c.

"If the master die before the apprentice attain the age of twenty-one years, the apprentice is equally bound as the servant of his deceased master's heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns—in fact, the apprentice is part of the deceased master's goods and chattels. Whoever, therefore, may carry on the trade, he is the servant of such person or persons until his manumission

is obtained by reaching his one-and-twentieth year. The apprentice has no regular pocket-money allowed him by the master. Sometimes a few halfpence are given to him. An apprentice of eighteen or nineteen years of age often has 2*d.* or 3*d.* a week given him, but never as a rightful claim."—*Second Report of Commissioners.*

"Among other witnesses, the superintendent registrar states that in those trades particularly in which the work is by the piece, the growth of the children is injured; that in these cases more especially their strength is over-taxed for profit. One of the constables of the town says that 'there are examples without number in the place, of deformed men and boys; their backs or their legs, and often both, grow wrong; the backs grow out and the legs grow in at the knees—hump-backed and knock-kneed. There is most commonly only one leg turned in—a K leg; it is occasioned by standing all day for years filing at a vice; the hind leg grows in—the leg that is hindermost. Thinks that among the adults of the working classes of Willenhall, whose work is all forging and filing, one-third of the number are afflicted with hernia,' &c."—*Horne, Evidence,* p. 28, No. 128.

As the profits of many of the masters are small, it may be supposed that the apprentices do not get the best of food, shelter, and clothing. We have the evidence of Henry Nicholls Payne, superintendent registrar of Wolverhampton, Henry Hill, Esq., magistrate, and Paul Law, of Wolverhampton, that it is common for masters to buy offal meat, and the meat of animals that have died from all manner of causes, for the food of apprentices. The clothing of these poor creatures is but thin tatters for all seasons. The apprentices constantly complain that they do not get enough to eat.

"They are frequently fed," says the sub-commissioner, "especially during the winter season, on red herrings, potatoes, bread with lard upon it, and have not always sufficient even of this.

"Their living is poor; they have not enough to eat. Did not know what it was to have butcher's meat above once a week; often a red herring was divided between two for dinner. The boys are often clemmed, (almost starved;) have often been to his house to ask for a bit of pudding—are frequent complaints. In some trades, particularly in the casting-shops of founderies, in the shops in which general forge or smith's work is done, and in the shops of the small locksmiths, screwmakers, &c., there are no regular meal-hours, but the children swallow their food as they can, during their work, often while noxious fumes or dust are flying about, and perhaps with noxious compositions in their unwashed hands."

The apprentices employed in nail-making are described as so many poorly fed and poorly clad slaves. Almost the whole population of Upper Sedgley and Upper Gormal, and nearly one-half of the population of Coseley, are employed in nail-making. The nails are made at forges by the hammer, and these forges, which are the workshops, are usually at the backs of the wretched hovels in which the work-people reside. "The best kind of forges," says Mr. Horne, "are little brick shops, of about fifteen feet long and twelve feet wide, in which seven or eight individuals constantly work together, with no ventilation except the door, and two slits, or loopholes, in the wall; but the great majority of these work-places are very much smaller, (about ten feet long by nine wide,) filthily dirty; and on

looking in upon one of them when the fire is not lighted, presents the appearance of a dilapidated coal-hole, or little black den." In these places children are first put to labour from the ages of seven to eight, where they continue to work daily, from six o'clock in the morning till seven or eight at night; and on weigh-days—the days the nails are taken to the factors—from three or four in the morning till nine at night. They gradually advance in the number of nails they are required to make per day, till they arrive at the *stint* of one thousand. A girl or boy of from ten to twelve years of age continually accomplishes this arduous task from day to day, and week to week. Their food at the same time is, in general, insufficient, their clothing miserable, and the wretchedness of their dwellings almost unparalleled.

"Throughout the long descent of the main roadway, or rather sludgeway, of Lower Gormal," says Mr. Horne, "and throughout the very long winding and straggling roadway of Coseley, I never saw one abode of a working family which had the least appearance of comfort or wholesomeness, while the immense majority were of the most wretched and sty-like description. The effect of these unfavourable circumstances is greatly to injure the health of the children, and to stop their growth; and it is remarkable that the boys are more injured than the girls, because the girls are not put to work as early as the boys by two years or more. They appear to bear the heat of the forges better, and they sometimes even become strong by their work."

The children employed in nail-making, in Scotland, evince the nature of their toil by their emaciated looks

and stunted growth. They are clothed in apparel in which many paupers would not dress; and they are starved into quickness at their work, as their meals depend on the quantity of work accomplished.

In the manufacture of earthenware there are many young slaves employed. The mould-runners are an especially pitiable class of workmen; they receive on a mould the ware as it is formed by the workmen, and carry it to the stove-room, where both mould and ware are arranged on shelves to dry. The same children liberate the mould when sufficiently dry, and carry it back to receive a fresh supply of ware, to be in like manner deposited on the shelves. They are also generally required by the workmen to "wedge their clay;" that is, to lift up large lumps of clay, which are to be thrown down forcibly on a hard surface to free the clay from air and to render it more compact. Excepting when thus engaged, they are constantly "on the run" from morning till night, always carrying a considerable weight. These children are generally pale, thin, weak, and unhealthy.

In the manufacture of glass the toil and suffering of the apprentices, as recorded in the evidence before the commissioners, are extreme. One witness said—

"From his experience he thinks the community has no idea of what a boy at a bottle-work goes through; 'it would never be allowed, if it were known;' he knows himself; he has been carried home from fair fatigue; and on two several occasions, when laid in bed, could not rest, and had to be taken out and laid on

the floor. These boys begin work on Sabbath evenings at ten o'clock, and are not at home again till between one and three on Monday afternoon. The drawing the bottles out of the arches is a work which no child should be allowed, on any consideration, to do; he himself has been obliged several times to have planks put in to walk on, which have caught fire under the feet; and a woollen cap over the ears and always mits on the hands; and a boy cannot generally stop in them above five minutes. There is no man that works in a bottle-work, but will corroborate the statement that such work checks the growth of the body; the irregularity and the unnatural times of work cause the boys and men to feel in a sort of stupor or dulness from heavy sweats and irregular hours. The boys work harder than any man in the works; all will allow that. From their experience of the bad effect on the health, witness and five others left the work, and none but one ever went to a bottle-work after."

The young females apprenticed to dress-makers suffer greatly from overwork and bad treatment, as has long been known. John Dalrymple, Esq., Assistant Surgeon, Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, narrates the following case:—

"A delicate and beautiful young woman, an orphan, applied at the hospital for very defective vision, and her symptoms were precisely as just described. Upon inquiry it was ascertained that she had been apprenticed to a milliner, and was in her last year of indentureship. Her working hours were eighteen in the day, occasionally even more; her meals were snatched with scarcely an interval of a few minutes from work, and her general health was evidently assuming a tendency to consumption. An appeal was made, by my directions, to her mistress for relaxation; but the reply was that, in the last year of her apprenticeship, her labours had become valuable, and that her mistress was entitled to them as a recompense for teaching. Subsequently a threat of appeal to the Lord Mayor, and a belief that a continuation of the

occupation would soon render the apprentice incapable of labour, induced the mistress to cancel the indentures, and the victim was saved."

Frederick Tyrrell, Esq., Surgeon to the London Ophthalmic Hospital, and to St. Thomas's Hospital, mentions a case equally distressing:—

"A fair and delicate girl, about seventeen years of age, was brought to witness in consequence of total loss of vision. She had experienced the train of symptoms which have been detailed, to the fullest extent. On examination, both eyes were found disorganized, and recovery therefore was hopeless. She had been an apprentice as a dress-maker at the west end of the town; and some time before her vision became affected, her general health had been materially deranged from too close confinement and excessive work. The immediate cause of the disease in the eyes was excessive and continued application to making mourning. She stated that she had been compelled to remain without changing her dress for nine days and nights consecutively; that during this period she had been permitted only occasionally to rest on a mattrass placed on the floor, for an hour or two at a time; and that her meals were placed at her side, cut up, so that as little time as possible should be spent in their consumption. Witness regrets that he did not, in this and a few other cases nearly as flagrant and distressing, induce the sufferers to appeal to a jury for compensation."

It may be asserted, without fear of successful contradiction, that, in proportion to the numbers employed, there are no occupations in which so much disease is produced as in dress-making. The report of a sub-commissioner states that it is a "serious aggravation of this evil, that the unkindness of the employer very frequently causes these young persons, when they be-

come unwell, to conceal their illness, from the fear of being sent out of the house; and in this manner the disease often becomes increased in severity, or is even rendered incurable. Some of the principals are so cruel, as to object to the young women obtaining medical assistance."

The London Times, in an exceedingly able article upon "Seamstress Slavery," thus describes the terrible system:—

"Granting that the negro gangs who are worked on the cotton grounds of the Southern States of North America, or in the sugar plantations of Brazil, are slaves, in what way should we speak of persons who are circumstanced in the manner we are about to relate? Let us consider them as inhabitants of a distant region —say of New Orleans—no matter about the colour of their skins, and then ask ourselves what should be our opinion of a nation in which such things are tolerated. They are of a sex and age the least qualified to struggle with the hardships of their lot—young women, for the most part, between sixteen and thirty years of age. As we would not deal in exaggerations, we would promise that we take them at their busy season, just as writers upon American slavery are careful to select the season of cotton-picking and sugar-crushing as illustrations of their theories. The young female slaves, then, of whom we speak, are worked in gangs, in ill-ventilated rooms, or rooms that are not ventilated at all; for it is found by experience that if air be admitted it brings with it "blacks" of another kind, which damage the work upon which the seamstresses are employed. Their occupation is to sew from morning till night and night till morning—stitch, stitch, stitch—without pause, without speech, without a smile, without a sigh. In the gray of the morning they must be at work, say at six o'clock, having a quarter of an hour allowed them for breaking their fast. The food served out to them is scanty and mise-

rable enough, but still, in all probability, more than their fevered system can digest. We do not, however, wish to make ou' a case of starvation; the suffering is of another kind, equally dreadful of endurance. From six o'clock till eleven it is stitch, stitch. At eleven a small piece of dry bread is served to each seamstress, but still she must stitch on. At one o'clock, twenty minutes are allowed for dinner—a slice of meat and a potato, with a glass of toast-and-water to each workwoman. Then again to work—stitch, stitch, until five o'clock, when fifteen minutes are again allowed for tea. The needles are then set in motion once more—stitch, stitch, until nine o'clock, when fifteen minutes are allowed for supper—a piece of dry bread and cheese and a glass of beer. From nine o'clock at night until one, two, and three o'clock in the morning, stitch, stitch; the only break in this long period being a minute or two—just time enough to swallow a cup of strong tea, which is supplied lest the young people should 'feel sleepy.' At three o'clock A. M., to bed; at six o'clock A. M., out of it again to resume the duties of the following day. There must be a good deal of monotony in the occupation.

"But when we have said that for certain months in the year these unfortunate young persons are worked in the manner we describe, we have not said all. Even during the few hours allotted to sleep—should we not rather say to a feverish cessation from toil—their miseries continue. They are cooped up in sleeping-pens, ten in a room which would perhaps be sufficient for the accommodation of two persons. The alternation is from the treadmill—and what a treadmill!—to the Black Hole of Calcutta. Not a word of remonstrance is allowed, or is possible. The seamstresses may leave the mill, no doubt, but what awaits them on the other side of the door?—starvation, if they be honest; if not, in all probability, prostitution and its consequence. They would scarcely escape from slavery that way. Surely this is a terrible state of things, and one which claims the anxious consideration of the ladies of England who have pronounced themselves so loudly against the horrors of negro slavery in the United States. Had this system of oppression against persons of their own sex been really exercised in New Orleans, it would have

elicited from them many expressions of sympathy for the sufferers, and of abhorrence for the cruel task-masters who could so cruelly overwork wretched creatures so unfitted for the toil. It is idle to use any further mystification in the matter. The scenes of misery we have described exist at our own doors, and in the most fashionable quarters of luxurious London. It is in the dressmaking and millinery establishments of the 'West-end' that the system is steadily pursued. The continuous labour is bestowed upon the gay garments in which the 'ladies of England' love to adorn themselves. It is to satisfy their whims and caprices that their wretched sisters undergo these days and nights of suffering and toil. It is but right that we should confess the fault does not lie so much at the door of the customers as with the principals of these establishments. The milliners and dressmakers of the metropolis will not employ hands enough to do the work. They increase their profits from the blood and life of the wretched creatures in their employ. Certainly the prices charged for articles of dress at any of the great West-end establishments are sufficiently high—as most English heads of families know to their cost—to enable the proprietors to retain a competent staff of work-people, and at the same time to secure a very handsome profit to themselves. Wherein, then, lies the remedy? Will the case of these poor seamstresses be bettered if the ladies of England abstain partially, or in great measure, from giving their usual orders to their usual houses? In that case it may be said some of the seamstresses will be dismissed to starvation, and the remainder will be overworked as before. We freely confess we do not see our way through the difficulty; for we hold the most improbable event in our social arrangements to be the fact, that a lady of fashion will employ a second-rate instead of a first-rate house for the purchase of her annual finery. The leading milliners and dressmakers of London have hold of English society at both ends. They hold the ladies by their vanity and their love of fine clothes, and the seamstresses by what appears to be their interest and by their love of life. Now, love of fine clothes and love of life are two very strong motive springs of human action."

SLAVES OF THE NEEDLE.

In confirmation of this thrilling representation of the seamstress slavery in London, the following letter subsequently appeared in the Times:—

"*To the Editor of the Times:*

"Sir,—May I beg of you to insert this letter in your valuable paper at your earliest convenience, relative to the letters of the 'First Hand?' I can state, without the slightest hesitation, that they are perfectly true. My poor sister was apprenticed to one of those fashionable West-end houses, and my father paid the large sum of £40 only to procure for his daughter a lingering death. I was allowed to visit her during her illness; I found her in a very small room, which two large beds would fill. In this room there were six children's bedsteads, and these were each to contain three grown-up young women. In consequence of my sister being so ill, she was allowed, on payment of 5*s.* per week, a bed to herself—one so small it might be called a cradle. The doctor who attended her when dying, can authenticate this letter.

"Apologizing for encroaching on your valuable time, I remain your obedient servant, A Poor Clerk."

Many witnesses attest the ferocious bodily chastisement inflicted upon male apprentices in workshops:—

"In Sedgley they are sometimes struck with a red-hot iron, and burned and bruised simultaneously; sometimes they have 'a flash of lightning' sent at them. When a bar of iron is drawn white-hot from the forge it emits fiery particles, which the man commonly flings in a shower upon the ground by a swing of his arm, before placing the bar upon the anvil. This shower is sometimes directed at the boy. It may come over his hands and face, his naked arms, or on his breast. If his shirt be open in front, which is usually the case, the red-hot particles are lodged therein, and he has to shake them out as fast as he can."—*Horne, Report*, p. 76, § 757. See also witnesses, p. 56, l. 24; p. 59, l. 54.

"In Darlaston, however, the children appear to be very little

"—— ——, aged seventeen: 'Has no father or mother to take his part. His master once cut his head open with a flat file-haft, and used to pull his ears nearly off; they bled so he was obliged to go into the house to wipe them with a cloth.'"—Ibid. p. 37, l. 7.

"—— ——, aged fifteen: 'The neighbours who live agen the shop will say how his master beats him; beats him with a strap, and sometimes a nut-stick; sometimes the wales remain upon him for a week; his master once cut his eyelid open, cut a hole in it, and it bled all over his files that he was working with.'"—Ibid. p. 37, l. 47.

"—— ——, aged 18: 'His master once ran at him with a hammer, and drove the iron-head of the hammer into his side—he felt it for weeks; his master often knocks him down on the shop-floor; he can't tell what it's all for, no more than you can; don't know what it can be for unless it's this, his master thinks he don't do enough work for him. When he is beaten, his master does not lay it on very heavy, as some masters do, only beats him for five minutes at a time; should think that was enough, though.'"—*Horne, Evidence*, p. 37, l. 57.

All this exists in a Christian land! Surely telescopic philanthropists must be numerous in Great Britain. Wonderful to relate, there are many persons instrumental in sustaining this barbarous system, who profess a holy horror of slavery, and who seldom rise up or lie down without offering prayers on behalf of the African bondsmen, thousands of miles away. Verily, there are many people in this motley world so organized that they can scent corruption "afar off," but gain no knowledge of the foulness under their very noses.

Henry Mayhew, in his "London Labour and the London Poor," gives some very interesting information in regard to the workshops in the great metropolis of

the British Empire. "In the generality of trades, the calculation is that one-third of the hands are fully employed, one-third partially, and one-third unemployed throughout the year." The wages of those who are regularly employed being scant, what must be the condition of those whose employment is but casual and precarious? Mayhew, says—

"The hours of labour in mechanical callings are usually twelve, two of them devoted to meals, or seventy-two hours (less by the permitted intervals) in a week. In the course of my inquiries for the *Chronicle*, I met with slop cabinet-makers, tailors, and milliners, who worked sixteen hours and more daily, their toil being only interrupted by the necessity of going out, if small masters, to purchase materials, and offer the goods for sale; or, if journeymen in the slop trade, to obtain more work and carry what was completed to the master's shop. They worked on Sundays also; one tailor told me that the coat he worked at on the previous Sunday was for the Rev. Mr. ——, who 'little thought it,' and these slop-workers rarely give above a few minutes to a meal. Thus they toil forty hours beyond the hours usual in an honourable trade, (112 hours instead of 72,) in the course of a week, or between three and four days of the regular hours of work of the six working days. In other words, two such men will in less than a week accomplish work which should occupy three men a full week; or 1000 men will execute labour fairly calculated to employ 1500 at the least. A paucity of employment is thus caused among the general body, by this system of over-labour decreasing the share of work accruing to the several operatives, and so adding to surplus hands.

"Of over-work, as regards excessive labour, both in the general and fancy cabinet trade, I heard the following accounts, which different operatives concurred in giving; while some represented the labour as of longer duration by at least an hour, and some by two hours a day, than I have stated.

"The labour of the men who depend entirely on 'the slaughter-houses' for the purchase of their articles is usually seven days a week the year through. That is, seven days—for Sunday-work is all but universal—each of thirteen hours, or ninety-one hours in all; while the established hours of labour in the 'honourable trade' are six days of the week, each of ten hours, or sixty hours in all. Thus fifty per cent. is added to the extent of the production of low-priced cabinet work, merely from 'over-hours;' but in some cases I heard of fifteen hours for seven days in the week, or 105 hours in all.

"Concerning the hours of labour in this trade, I had the following minute particulars from a garret-master who was a chair-maker:—

"'I work from six every morning to nine at night; some work till ten. My breakfast at eight stops me for ten minutes. I can breakfast in less time, but it's a rest. My dinner takes me say twenty minutes at the outside; and my tea eight minutes. All the rest of the time I'm slaving at my bench. How many minutes' rest is that, sir? Thirty-eight; well, say three-quarters of an hour, and that allows a few sucks at a pipe when I rest; but I can smoke and work too. I have only one room to work and eat in, or I should lose more time. Altogether, I labour fourteen and a quarter hours every day, and I must work on Sundays—at least forty Sundays in the year. One may as well work as sit fretting. But on Sundays I only work till it's dusk, or till five or six in summer. When it's dusk I take a walk. I'm not well dressed enough for a Sunday walk when it's light, and I can't wear my apron on that day very well to hide patches. But there's eight hours that I reckon I take up every week, one with another, in dancing about to the slaughterers. I'm satisfied that I work very nearly 100 hours a week the year through; deducting the time taken up by the slaughterers, and buying stuff—say eight hours a week—it gives more than ninety hours a week for my work, and there's hundreds labour as hard as I do, just for a crust.'

"The East-end turners generally, I was informed, when inquiring into the state of that trade, labour at the lathe from six

o'clock in the morning till eleven and twelve at night, being eighteen hours' work per day, or one hundred and eight hours per week. They allow themselves two hours for their meals. It takes them, upon an average, two hours more every day fetching and carrying their work home. Some of the East-end men work on Sundays, and not a few either,' said my informant. 'Sometimes I have worked hard,' said one man, 'from six one morning till four the next, and scarcely had any time to take my meals in the bargain. I have been almost suffocated with the dust flying down my throat after working so many hours upon such heavy work too, and sweating so much. It makes a man drink where he would not.'

"This system of over-work exists in the 'slop' part of almost every business; indeed, it is the principal means by which the cheap trade is maintained. Let me cite from my letters in the *Chronicle* some more of my experience on this subject. As regards the London mantuamakers, I said:—'The workwomen for good shops that give fair, or tolerably fair wages, and expect good work, can make six average-sized mantles in a week, *working from ten to twelve hours a day;* but the slop-workers by toiling from thirteen to sixteen hours a day, will make *nine* such sized mantles in a week. In a season of twelve weeks, 1000 workers for the slop-houses and warehouses would at this rate make 108,000 mantles, or 36,000 more than workers for the fair trade. Or, to put it in another light, these slop-women, by being compelled, in order to live, to work such over-hours as inflict lasting injury on the health, supplant, by their over-work and over-hours, the labour of 500 hands, working the regular hours."

Mr. Mayhew states it as a plain, unerring law, that "over-work makes under-pay, and under-pay makes over-work." True; but under-pay in the first place gave rise to prolonged hours of toil; and in spite of all laws that may be enacted, as long as a miserable pittance is paid to labourers, and that, too, devoured by

taxes, supporting an aristocracy in luxury, so long will the workman be compelled to slave for a subsistence.

The "strapping" system, which demands an undue quantity of work from a journeyman in the course of a day, is extensively maintained in London. Mr. Mayhew met with a miserable victim of this system of slavery, who appeared almost exhausted with excessive toil. The poor fellow said—

"'I work in what is called a strapping-shop, and have worked at nothing else for these many years past in London. I call "strapping" doing as much work as a human being or a horse possibly can in a day, and that without any hanging upon the collar, but with the foreman's eyes constantly fixed upon you, from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night. The shop in which I work is for all the world like a prison; the silent system is as strictly carried out there as in a model jail. If a man was to ask any common question of his neighbour, except it was connected with his trade, he would be discharged there and then. If a journeyman makes the least mistake he is packed off just the same. A man working at such places is almost always in fear; for the most trifling things he's thrown out of work in an instant. And then the quantity of work that one is forced to get through is positively awful; if he can't do a plenty of it he don't stop long where I am. No one would think it was possible to get so much out of blood and bones. No slaves work like we do. At some of the strapping shops the foreman keeps continually walking about with his eyes on all the men at once. At others the foreman is perched high up, so that he can have the whole of the men under his eye together. I suppose since I knew the trade that a *man does four times the work that he did formerly*. I know a man that's done four pairs of sashes in a day, and one is considered to be a good day's labour. What's worse than all, the men are every one striving one against the other. Each is trying to get through the work quicker than his neighbours. Four

or five men are set the same job, so that they may be all pitted against one another, and then away they go, every one striving his hardest for fear that the others should get finished first. They are all tearing along, from the first thing in the morning to the last at night, as hard as they can go, and when the time comes to knock off they are ready to drop. I was hours after I got home last night before I could get a wink of sleep; the soles of my feet were on fire, and my arms ached to that degree that I could hardly lift my hand to my head. Often, too, when we get up of a morning, we are more tired than when we went to bed, for we can't sleep many a night; but we mus'n't let our employers know it, or else they'd be certain we couldn't do enough for them, and we'd get the sack. So, tired as we may be, we are obliged to look lively, somehow or other, at the shop of a morning. If we're not beside our bench the very moment the bell's done ringing, our time's docked—they won't give us a single minute out of the hour. If I was working for a fair master, I should do nearly one-third, and sometimes a half, less work than I am now forced to get through; and, even to manage that much, I shouldn't be idle a second of my time. It's quite a mystery to me how they *do* contrive to get so much work out of the men. But they are very clever people. They know how to have the most out of a man, better than any one in the world. They are all picked men in the shop—regular "strappers," and no mistake. The most of them are five foot ten, and fine broad-shouldered, strong-backed fellows too—if they weren't they wouldn't have them. Bless you, they make no words with the men, they sack them if they're not strong enough to do all they want; and they can pretty soon tell, the very first shaving a man strikes in the shop, what a chap is made of. Some men are done up at such work—quite old men and gray, with spectacles on, by the time they are forty. I have seen fine strong men, of thirty-six, come in there, and be bent double in two or three years. They are most all countrymen at the strapping shops. If they see a great strapping fellow, who they think has got some stuff about him that will come out, they will give him a job directly. We are used for all the world like cab or omnibus-horses. Directly

they've had all the work out of us, we are turned off, and I am sure, after my day's work is over, my feelings must be very much the same as one of the London cab-horses. As for Sunday, it is *literally* a day of rest with us, for the greater part of us lay a-bed all day, and even that will hardly take the aches and pains out of our bones and muscles. When I'm done and flung by, of course I must starve.'"

It may be said that, exhausting as this labour certainly is, it is not slavery; for the workman has a will of his own, and need not work if he does not choose to do it. Besides, he is not held by law; he may leave the shop; he may seek some other land. These circumstances make his case very different from the negro slave of America. True, but the difference is in favour of the negro slave. The London workman has only the alternative—such labour as has been described, the workhouse, or starvation. The negro slave seldom has such grinding toil, is provided for whether he performs it or not, and can look forward to an old age of comfort and repose. The London workman may leave his shop, but he will be either consigned to the prison of a workhouse or starved. He might leave the country, if he could obtain the necessary funds.

Family work, or the conjoint labour of a workman's wife and children, is one of the results of the wretchedly rewarded slavery in the various trades. Mr. Mayhew gives the following statement of a "fancy cabinet" worker upon this subject:—

"The most on us has got large families; we put the children

to work as soon as we can. My little girl began about six, but about eight or nine is the usual age. 'Oh, poor little things,' said the wife, 'they are obliged to begin the very minute they can use their fingers at all.' The most of the cabinet-makers of the East end have from five to six in family, and they are generally all at work for them. The small masters mostly marry when they are turned of twenty. You see our trade's coming to such a pass, that unless a man has children to help him he can't live at all. I've worked more than a month together, and the longest night's rest I've had has been an hour and a quarter; ay, and I've been up three nights a week besides. I've had my children lying ill, and been obliged to wait on them into the bargain. You see we couldn't live if it wasn't for the labour of our children, though it makes 'em—poor little things!—old people long afore they are growed up.'

"'Why, I stood at this bench,' said the wife, 'with my child, only ten years of age, from four o'clock on Friday morning till ten minutes past seven in the evening, without a bit to eat or drink. I never sat down a minute from the time I began till I finished my work, and then I went out to sell what I had done. I walked all the way from here [Shoreditch] down to the Lowther Arcade to get rid of the articles.' Here she burst out into a violent flood of tears, saying, 'Oh, sir, it is hard to be obliged to labour from morning till night as we do, all of us, little ones and all, and yet not be able to live by it either.'

"'And you see the worst of it is, this here children's labour is of such value now in our trade, that there's more brought into the business every year, so that it's really for all the world *like breeding slaves*. Without my children I don't know how we should be able to get along.' 'There's that little thing,' said the man, pointing to the girl ten years of age, before alluded to, as she sat at the edge of the bed, 'why she works regularly every day from six in the morning till ten at night. She never goes to school; we can't spare her. There's schools enough about here for a penny a week, but we could not afford to keep her without working. If I'd ten more children I should be obliged to employ them all the same way, and there's hundreds and thousands of children

now slaving at this business. There's the M——'s; they have a family of eight, and the youngest to the oldest of all works at the bench; and the oldest a'n't fourteen. I'm sure, of the two thousand five hundred small masters in the cabinet line, you may safely say that two thousand of them, at the very least, have from five to six in family, and that's upward of twelve thousand children that's been put to the trade since prices have come down. Twenty years ago I don't think there was a child at work in our business; and I am sure there is not a small master now whose whole family doesn't assist him. But what I want to know is, what's to become of the twelve thousand children when they're growed up and come regular into the trade? Here are all my ones growing up without being taught any thing but a business that I know they must starve at.'

"In answer to my inquiry as to what dependence he had in case of sickness, 'Oh, bless you,' he said, 'there's nothing but the parish for us. I *did* belong to a benefit society about four years ago, but I couldn't keep up my payments any longer. I was in the society above five-and-twenty years, and then was obliged to leave it after all. I don't know of one as belongs to any friendly society, and I don't think there is a man as can afford it in our trade now. They must all go to the workhouse when they're sick or old.'"

The "trading operatives," or those labourers who employ subordinate and cheaper work-people, are much decried in England; but they, also, are the creations of the general system. A workman frequently ascertains that he can make more money with less labour, by employing women or children at home, than if he did all of his own work; and very often men are driven to this resource to save themselves from being worked to death. The condition of those persons who work for

the "trading operatives," or "middle-men," is as miserable as imagination may conceive.

In Charles Kingsley's popular novel, "Alton Locke," we find a vivid and truthful picture of the London tailor's workshop, and the slavery of the workmen, which may be quoted here in illustration:—

"I stumbled after Mr. Jones up a dark, narrow iron staircase, till we emerged through a trap-door into a garret at the top of the house. I recoiled with disgust at the scene before me; and here I was to work—perhaps through life! A low lean-to room, stifling me with the combined odours of human breath and perspiration, stale beer, the sweet sickly smell of gin, and the sour and hardly less disgusting one of new cloth. On the floor, thick with dust and dirt, scraps of stuff and ends of thread, sat some dozen haggard, untidy, shoeless men, with a mingled look of care and recklessness that made me shudder. The windows were tight closed to keep out the cold winter air; and the condensed breath ran in streams down the panes, checkering the dreary outlook of chimney-tops and smoke. The conductor handed me over to one of the men.

"'Here Crossthwaite, take this younker and make a tailor of him. Keep him next you, and prick him up with your needle if he shirks.'

"He disappeared down the trap-door, and mechanically, as if in a dream, I sat down by the man and listened to his instructions, kindly enough bestowed. But I did not remain in peace two minutes. A burst of chatter rose as the foreman vanished, and a tall, bloated, sharp-nosed young man next me bawled in my ear—

"'I say, young 'un, fork out the tin and pay your footing at Consumption Hospital!'

"'What do you mean?'

"'A'n't he just green?—Down with the stumpy—a tizzy for a pot of half-and-half.'

"'I never drink beer.'

"'Then never do,' whispered the man at my side; 'as sure as hell's hell, it's your only chance.'

"There was a fierce, deep earnestness in the tone, which made me look up at the speaker, but the other instantly chimed in.

"'Oh, yer don't, don't yer, my young Father Mathy! then yer'll soon learn it here if yer want to keep your victuals down.'

"'And I have promised to take my wages home to my mother.'

"'Oh criminy! hark to that, my coves! here's a chap as is going to take the blunt home to his mammy.'

"'T'a'nt much of it the old un'll see,' said another. 'Ven yer pockets it at the Cock and Bottle, my kiddy, yer won't find much of it left o' Sunday mornings.'

"'Don't his mother know he's out?' asked another; 'and won't she know it—

Ven he's sitting in his glory
Half-price at the Vic-tory.

Oh no, ve never mentions her—her name is never heard. Certainly not, by no means. Why should it?'

"'Well, if yer won't stand a pot,' quoth the tall man, 'I will, that's all, and blow temperance. 'A short life and a merry one,' says the tailor—

The ministers talk a great deal about port,
And they makes Cape wine very dear,
But blow their hi's if ever they tries
To deprive a poor cove of his beer.

Here, Sam, run to the Cock and Bottle for a pot of half-and-half to my score.'

"A thin, pale lad jumped up and vanished, while my tormentor turned to me:

"I say, young 'un, do you know why we're nearer heaven here than our neighbours?'

"'I shouldn't have thought so,' answered I with a *naïveté* which raised a laugh, and dashed the tall man for a moment.

"'Yer don't? then I'll tell yer. Acause we're atop of the house in the first place, and next place yer'll die here six months

sooner nor if yer worked in the room below. A'n't that logic and science, Orator?' appealing to Crossthwaite.

"'Why?' asked I.

"'Acause you get all the other floors' stinks up here, as well as your own. Concentrated essence of man's flesh, is this here as you're a-breathing. Cellar work-room we calls Rheumatic Ward, because of the damp. Ground-floor's, Fever Ward—them as don't get typhus gets dysentery, and them as don't get dysentery gets typhus—your nose 'd tell yer why if you opened the back windy. First floor's Ashmy Ward—don't you hear 'um now through the cracks in the boards, a-puffing away like a nest of young locomotives? And this here more august and upper-crust cockloft is the Conscrumptive Hospital. First you begins to cough, then you proceed to expectorate—spittoons, as you see, perwided free gracious for nothing—fined a kivarten if you spits on the floor—

> Then your cheeks they grow red, and your nose it grows thin,
> And your bones they sticks out, till they comes through your skin:

and then, when you've sufficiently covered the poor dear shivering bare backs of the hairystocracy,

> Die, die, die,
> Away you fly,
> Your soul is in the sky!

as the hinspired Shakspeare wittily remarks.'

"And the ribald lay down on his back, stretched himself out, and pretended to die in a fit of coughing, which last was alas! no counterfeit, while poor I, shocked and bewildered, let my tears fall fast upon my knees.

"'Fine him a pot!' roared one, 'for talking about kicking the bucket. He's a nice young man to keep a cove's spirits up, and talk about "a short life and a merry one." Here comes the heavy. Hand it here to take the taste of that fellow's talk out of my mouth.'

"'Well, my young 'un,' recommenced my tormentor, 'and how do you like your company?'

"'Leave the boy alone,' growled Crossthwaite: 'don't you see he's crying?'

"'Is that any thing good to eat? Give me some on it, if it is—it 'll save me washing my face.' And he took hold of my hair and pulled my head back.

"'I'll tell you what, Jemmy Downes,' said Crossthwaite, in a voice that made him draw back, 'if you don't drop that, I'll give you such a taste of my tongue as shall turn you blue.'

"'You'd better try it on, then. Do—only just now—if you please.'

"'Be quiet, you fool!' said another. 'You're a pretty fellow to chaff the orator. He'll slang you up the chimney afore you can get your shoes on.'

"'Fine him a kivarten for quarrelling,' cried another; and the bully subsided into a minute's silence, after a *sotto voce*—'Blow temperance, and blow all Chartists, say I!' and then delivered himself of his feelings in a doggrel song:

Some folks leads coves a dance,
With their pledge of temperance,
And their plans for donkey sociation;
And their pocket-fulls they crams
By their patriotic flams,
And then swears 'tis for the good of the nation.

But I don't care two inions
For political opinions,
While I can stand my heavy and my quartern;
For to drown dull care within,
In baccy, beer, and gin,
Is the prime of a working-tailor's fortin!

"'There's common sense for you now; hand the pot here.'

"I recollect nothing more of that day, except that I bent myself to my work with assiduity enough to earn praises from Crossthwaite. It was to be done, and I did it. The only virtue I ever possessed (if virtue it be) is the power of absorbing my whole heart and mind in the pursuit of the moment, however dull or trivial, if there be good reason why it should be pursued at all.

"I owe, too, an apology to my readers for introducing all this ribaldry. God knows it is as little to my taste as it can be to theirs, but the thing exists; and those who live, if not by, yet still beside such a state of things, ought to know what the men are like, to whose labour, ay, life-blood, they owe their luxuries. They are 'their brothers' keepers,' let them deny it as they will."

As a relief from misery, the wretched workmen generally resort to intoxicating liquors, which, however, ultimately render them a hundredfold more miserable. In "Alton Locke," this is illustrated with an almost fearful power, in the life and death of the tailor Downes. After saving the wretched man from throwing himself into the river, Alton Locke accompanies him to a disgusting dwelling, in Bermondsey. The story continues:—

"He stopped at the end of a miserable blind alley, where a dirty gas-lamp just served to make darkness visible, and show the patched windows and rickety doorways of the crazy houses, whose upper stories were lost in a brooding cloud of fog; and the pools of stagnant water at our feet: and the huge heap of cinders which filled up the waste end of the alley—a dreary black, formless mound, on which two or three spectral dogs prowled up and down after the offal, appearing and vanishing like dark imps in and out of the black misty chaos beyond.

"The neighbourhood was undergoing, as it seemed, 'improvements,' of that peculiar metropolitan species which consists in pulling down the dwellings of the poor, and building up rich men's houses instead; and great buildings, within high temporary palings, had already eaten up half the little houses; as the great fish, and the great estates, and the great shopkeepers, eat up the little ones of their species—by the law of competition, lately discovered to be the true creator and preserver of the universe. There they loomed up, the tall bullies, against the dreary

sky, looking down with their grim, proud, stony visages, on the misery which they were driving out of one corner, only to accumulate and intensify it in another.

"The house at which we stopped was the last in the row; all its companions had been pulled down; and there it stood, leaning out with one naked ugly side into the gap, and stretching out long props, like feeble arms and crutches, to resist the work of demolition.

"A group of slatternly people were in the entry, talking loudly, and as Downes pushed by them, a woman seized him by the arm.

"'Oh! you unnatural villain!—To go away after your drink, and leave all them poor dead corpses locked up, without even letting a body go in to stretch them out!'

"'And breeding the fever, too, to poison the whole house!' growled one.

"The relieving-officer's been here, my cove,' said another; 'and he's gone for a peeler and a search-warrant to break open the door, I can tell you!'

"But Downes pushed past unheeding, unlocked a door at the end of the passage, thrust me in, locked it again, and then rushed across the room in chase of two or three rats, who vanished into cracks and holes.

"And what a room! A low lean-to with wooden walls, without a single article of furniture; and through the broad chinks of the floor shone up as it were ugly glaring eyes, staring at us. They were the reflections of the rushlight in the sewer below. The stench was frightful—the air heavy with pestilence. The first breath I drew made my heart sink, and my stomach turn. But I forgot every thing in the object which lay before me, as Downes tore a half-finished coat off three corpses laid side by side on the bare floor.

"There was his little Irish wife;—dead—and naked—the wasted white limbs gleamed in the lurid light; the unclosed eyes stared, as if reproachfully, at the husband whose drunkenness had brought her there to kill her with the pestilence; and on each side of her a little, shrivelled, impish, child-corpse—the wretched man had laid their arms round the dead mother's neck—and there they slept, their hungering and wailing over at last

for ever: the rats had been busy already with them—but what matter to them now?

"'Look!' he cried; 'I watched 'em dying! Day after day I saw the devils come up through the cracks, like little maggots and beetles, and all manner of ugly things, creeping down their throats; and I asked 'em, and they said they were the fever devils.'

"It was too true; the poisonous exhalations had killed them. The wretched man's delirium tremens had given that horrible substantiality to the poisonous fever gases.

"Suddenly Downes turned on me almost menacingly. 'Money! money! I want some gin!'

"I was thoroughly terrified—and there was no shame in feeling fear, locked up with a madman far my superior in size and strength, in so ghastly a place. But the shame, and the folly too, would have been in giving way to my fear; and with a boldness half assumed, half the real fruit of excitement and indignation at the horrors I beheld, I answered—

"'If I had money, I would give you none. What do you want with gin? Look at the fruits of your accursed tippling. If you had taken my advice, my poor fellow,' I went on, gaining courage as I spoke, 'and become a water-drinker, like me'——

"'Curse you and your water-drinking! If you had had no water to drink or wash with for two years but that—that,' pointing to the foul ditch below—'If you had emptied the slops in there with one hand, and filled your kettle with the other'——

"'Do you actually mean that that sewer is your only drinking water?'

"'Where else can we get any? Everybody drinks it; and you shall too—you shall!' he cried, with a fearful oath, 'and then see if you don't run off to the gin-shop, to take the taste of it out of your mouth. Drink! and who can help drinking, with his stomach turned with such hell-broth as that—or such a hell's blast as this air is here, ready to vomit from morning till night with the smells? I'll show you. You shall drink a bucket-full of it, as sure as you live, you shall.'

"And he ran out of the back door, upon a little balcony, which hung over the ditch.

"I tried the door, but the key was gone, and the handle too. I beat furiously on it, and called for help: Two gruff authoritative voices were heard in the passage.

"'Let us in; I'm the policeman!'

"'Let me out, or mischief will happen!'

"The policeman made a vigorous thrust at the crazy door; and just as it burst open, and the light of his lantern streamed into the horrible den, a heavy splash was heard outside.

"'He has fallen into the ditch!'

"'He'll be drowned, then, as sure as he's a born man,' shouted one of the crowd behind.

"We rushed out on the balcony. The light of the policeman's lantern glared over the ghastly scene—along the double row of miserable house-backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch—over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish gravelights—over bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcases of dogs, and lumps of offal, floating on the stagnant olive-green hell-broth—over the slow sullen rows of oily ripple which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stirred, hot breaths of miasma—the only sign that a spark of humanity, after years of foul life, had quenched itself at last in that foul death. I almost fancied that I could see the haggard face staring up at me through the slimy water; but no—it was as opaque as stone."

Downes had been a "sweater," and before his death was a "sweater's slave."

When the comparatively respectable workshop in which Alton Locke laboured was broken up, and the workmen were told by the heartless employer that he intended to give out work, for those who could labour at home, these toil-worn men held a meeting, at which

a man named John Crossthwaite, thus spoke for his oppressed and degraded class:—

"We were all bound to expect this. Every working tailor must come to this at last, on the present system; and we are only lucky in having been spared so long. You all know where this will end—in the same misery as fifteen thousand out of twenty thousand of our class are enduring now. We shall become the slaves, often the bodily prisoners, of Jews, middlemen, and sweaters, who draw their livelihood out of our starvation. We shall have to face, as the rest have, ever-decreasing prices of labour, ever-increasing profits made out of that labour by the contractors who will employ us—arbitrary fines, inflicted at the caprice of hirelings—the competition of women, and children, and starving Irish—our hours of work will increase one-third, our actual pay decrease to less than one-half; and in all this we shall have no hope, no chance of improvement in wages, but ever more penury, slavery, misery, as we are pressed on by those who are sucked by fifties—almost by hundreds—yearly, out of the honourable trade in which we were brought up, into the infernal system of contract work, which is devouring our trade and many others, body and soul. Our wives will be forced to sit up night and day to help us—our children must labour from the cradle, without chance of going to school, hardly of breathing the fresh air of heaven—our boys as they grow up must turn beggars or paupers—our daughters, as thousands do, must eke our their miserable earnings by prostitution. And, after all, a whole family will not gain what one of us had been doing, as yet, single-handed. You know there will be no hope for us. There is no use appealing to government or Parliament. I don't want to talk politics here. I shall keep them for another place. But you can recollect as well as I can, when a deputation of us went up to a member of Parliament—one that was reputed a philosopher, and a political economist, and a liberal—and set before him the ever-increasing penury and misery of our trade and of those connected with it; you recollect his answer—that, however glad he would be to help us, it was impossible—he could not alter the laws of nature—that

wages were regulated by the amount of competition among the men themselves, and that it was no business of government, or any one else, to interfere in contracts between the employer and employed, that those things regulated themselves by the laws of political economy, which it was madness and suicide to oppose. He may have been a wise man. I only know that he was a rich one. Every one speaks well of the bridge which carries him over. Every one fancies the laws which fill his pockets to be God's laws. But I say this: If neither government nor members of Parliament can help us, we must help ourselves. Help yourselves, and Heaven will help you. Combination among ourselves is the only chance. One thing we can do—sit still.'

"'And starve!' said some one."

Crossthwaite is represented as having preferred to endure want rather than work under the sweating system. But there are few men who possess such spirit and determination. Men with families are compelled, by considering those who are dependent upon them, to work for whatever prices the masters choose to pay. They are free labourers—if they do not choose to work—they are perfectly free—to starve!

The government took the initiative in the sweating system. It set the example by giving the army and navy clothes to contractors, and taking the lowest tenders. The police clothes, the postmen's clothes, the convict's clothes, are all contracted for by sweaters and sub-sweaters, till government work is the very last, lowest resource to which a poor, starved-out wretch betakes himself, to keep body and soul together. Thus is profit made from the pauperism of men, the slavery of children, and the prostitution of women, in Great Britain.

Some years ago the following announcement appeared in the Village Gazette:—

"Peter Moreau and his wife are dead, aged twenty-five years. Too much work has killed them and many besides. We say—Work like a negro, like a galley-slave: we ought to say—Work like a freeman."

Work like negro slaves, indeed! There is no such work in America, even among the slaves; all day long, from Monday morning till Saturday night, week after week, and year after year, till the machine is worn out. American slaves and convicts in New South Wales are fat and happy, compared with the labourers of England. It frequently happens that Englishmen commit crimes for the purpose of becoming galley-slaves in New South Wales. They do not keep their purpose secret; they declare it loudly with tears and passionate exclamations to the magistrate who commits them for trial, to the jury who try them, and to the judge who passes sentence on them. This is published in the newspapers, but so often that it excites no particular comment.

The parish apprentices are the worst-treated slaves in the world. They are at the mercy of their masters and mistresses during their term of apprenticeship, without protectors, and without appeal against the most cruel tyranny. In the reign of George III., one Elizabeth Brownrigg was hanged for beating and starving to death her parish apprentices. In 1831, another woman, Esther Hibner by name, was hanged in London for

beating and starving to death a parish apprentice. Two instances of punishment, for thousands of cases of impunity!

"The evidence in the case of Esther Hibner proved that a number of girls, pauper apprentices, were employed in a workshop; that their victuals consisted of garbage, commonly called hog's-wash, and that of this they never had enough to stay the pains of hunger; that they were kept half-naked, half-clothed in dirty rags; that they slept in a heap on the floor, amid filth and stench; that they suffered dreadfully from cold; that they were forced to work so many hours together that they used to fall asleep while at work; that for falling asleep, for not working as hard as their mistress wished, they were beaten with sticks, with fists, dragged by the hair, dashed on to the ground, trampled upon, and otherwise tortured; that they were found, all of them more or less, covered with chilblains, scurvy, bruises, and wounds; that one of them died of ill-treatment; and—mark this—that the discovery of that murder was made in consequence of the number of coffins which had issued from Esther Hibner's premises, and raised the curiosity of her neighbours. For this murder Mrs. Hibner was hanged; but what did she get for all the other murders which, referring to the number of coffins, we have a right to believe that she committed? She got for each £10. That is to say, whenever she had worked, starved, beaten, dashed and trampled a girl to death, she got another girl to treat in the same way, with £10 for her trouble. She carried on a trade in the murder of parish apprentices; and if she had conducted it with moderation, if the profit and custom of murder had not made her grasping and careless, the constitution, which protects the poor as well as the rich, would never have interfered with her. The law did not permit her to do what she liked with her apprentices, as Americans do with their slaves; oh no. Those free-born English children were merely bound as apprentices, with their own consent, under the eye of the magistrate, in order that they might learn a trade and become valuable subjects. But did the magistrate ever visit Mrs. Hibner's factory to see how she treated the free-born English

girls? never. Did the parish officers? no. Was there any legal provision for the discovery of the woman's trade in murder? none."

"You still read on the gates of London poorhouses, 'strong, healthy boys and girls,' &c.; and boys or girls you may obtain by applying within, as many as you please, free-born, with the usual fee. Having been paid for taking them, and having gone through the ceremonies of asking their consent and signing bonds before a magistrate, you may make them into sausages, for any thing the constitution will do to prevent you. If it should be proved that you kill even one of them, you will be hanged; but you may half-starve them, beat them, torture them, any thing short of killing them, with perfect security; and using a little circumspection, you may kill them too, without much danger. Suppose they die, who cares? Their parents? they are orphans, or have been abandoned by their parents. The parish officers? very likely, indeed, that these, when the poorhouse is crammed with orphan and destitute children, should make inquiries troublesome to themselves; inquiries which, being troublesome to you, might deprive them of your custom in future. The magistrate? he asked the child whether it consented to be your apprentice; the child said 'Yes, your worship;' and there his worship's duty ends. The neighbours? of course, if you raise their curiosity like Esther Hibner, but not otherwise. In order to be quite safe, I tell you you must be a little circumspect. But let us suppose that you are timid, and would drive a good trade without the shadow of risk. In that case, half-starve your apprentices, cuff them, kick them, torment them till they run away from you. They will not go back to the poorhouse, because there they would be flogged for having run away from you: besides, the poorhouse is any thing but a pleasant place. The boys will turn beggars or thieves, and the girls prostitutes; you will have pocketed £10 for each of them, and may get more boys and girls on the same terms, to treat in the same way. This trade is as safe as it is profitable."*

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* *England and America*, Harpers & Brothers, publishers, 1834.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WORKHOUSE SYSTEM OF BRITAIN.

THE English writers generally point to the poor-laws of their country as a proud evidence of the merciful and benevolent character of the government. Look at those laws! so much have we done in the cause of humanity. See how much money we expend every year for the relief of the poor! Our workhouses are maintained at an enormous expense. Very well; but it takes somewhat from the character of the doctor, to ascertain that he gave the wound he makes a show of healing. What are the sources of the immense pauperism of Britain? The enormous monopoly of the soil, and the vast expense of civil and ecclesiastical aristocracy. The first takes work from one portion of the people, and the latter takes the profits of work from the other portion. The "glorious institutions" of Britain crowd the workhouses; and we are now going to show the horrible system under which paupers are held in these establishments.

The labouring classes are constantly exposed to the chance of going to the workhouse. Their wages are so low, or so preyed upon by taxes, that they have no opportunity of providing for a "rainy day." A few

weeks' sickness, a few weeks' absence of work, and, starvation staring them in the face, they are forced to apply to the parish authorities for relief. Once within the gate of the workhouse, many never entertain the idea of coming out until they are carried forth in their coffins.

Each parish has a workhouse, which is under the control of several guardians, who, again, are under the orders of a Board of Commissioners sitting at London. Many—perhaps a majority—of the guardians of the parishes are persons without those humane feelings which should belong to such officials, and numerous petty brutalities are added to those which are inherent in the British workhouse system.

Robert Southey says—

"When the poor are incapable of contributing any longer to their own support, they are removed to what is called the workhouse. I cannot express to you the feelings of hopelessness and dread with which all the decent poor look on to this wretched termination of a life of labour. To this place all vagrants are sent for punishment; unmarried women with child go here to be delivered; and poor orphans and base-born children are brought up here until they are of age to be apprenticed off; the other inmates are of those unhappy people who are utterly helpless, parish idiots and madmen, the blind and the palsied, and the old who are fairly worn out. It is not in the nature of things that the superintendents of such institutions as these should be gentle-hearted, when the superintendence is undertaken merely for the sake of the salary. To this society of wretchedness the labouring poor of England look as their last resting-place on this side of the grave; and, rather than enter abodes so miserable, they endure the severest privations as long as it is possible to exist. A feel-

ing of honest pride makes them shrink from a place where guilt and poverty are confounded; and it is heart-breaking for those who have reared a family of their own to be subjected, in their old age, to the harsh and unfeeling authority of persons younger than themselves, neither better born nor better bred."

This is no less true, than admirable as a specimen of prose. It was true when Southey penned it, and it is true now. Let us look at some of the provisions of the poor-laws of England, which form the much-lauded system of charity.

One of these provisions refuses relief to those who will not accept that relief except in the character of inmates of the workhouse, and thus compels the poor applicants to either perish of want or tear asunder all the ties of home. To force the wretched father from the abode of his family, is a piece of cruelty at which every humane breast must revolt. What wonder that many perish for want of food, rather than leave all that is dear to them on earth? If they must die, they prefer to depart surrounded by affectionate relatives, rather than by callous "guardians of the poor," who calculate the trouble and the expense of the burial before the breath leaves the body. The framers of the poor-laws forgot—perchance—that, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

Another provision of the poor-laws denies the consolations of religion to those whose conscientious scruples will not allow them to worship according to the forms of the established church. This is totally at variance

with the spirit of true Christianity, and a most barbarous privation. One would think that British legislators doubted the supreme efficacy of the Christian faith in saving souls from destruction. Why should not the balm be applied, regardless of the formal ceremonies, if it possesses any healing virtues? But the glory of the English Church is its iron observance of forms; and, rather than relax one jot, it would permit the souls of millions to be swept away into the gloom of eternal night.

Then, there is the separation regulation, dragging after it a long train of horrors and heart-rending sufferings—violating the law of holy writ—"Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder"—and trampling upon the best feelings of human nature.

A thrilling illustration of the operation of this law is narrated by Mr. James Grant.* We quote:—

"Two persons, man and wife, of very advanced years, were at last, through the infirmities consequent on old age, rendered incapable of providing for themselves. Their friends were like themselves, poor; but, so long as they could, they afforded them all the assistance in their power. The infirmities of the aged couple became greater and greater; so, as a necessary consequence, did their wants. The guardians of the poor—their parish being under the operation of the new measure—refused to afford them the slightest relief. What was to be done? They had no alternative but starvation and the workhouse. To have gone to the workhouse, even had they been permitted to live together,

* Every-day Life in London.

could have been painful enough to their feelings; but to go there to be separated from each other, was a thought at which their hearts sickened. They had been married for nearly half a century; and during all that time had lived in the greatest harmony together. I am speaking the language of unexaggerated truth when I say, that their affection for each other increased, instead of suffering diminution, as they advanced in years. A purer or stronger attachment than theirs has never, perhaps, existed in a world in which there is so much of mutability as in ours. Many were the joys and many were the sorrows which they had equally shared with each other. Their joys were increased, because participated in by both: their sorrows were lessened, because of the consolations they assiduously administered to each other when the dispensations of Providence assumed a lowering aspect. The reverses they had experienced, in the course of their long and eventful union, had only served to attach them the more strongly to each other, just as the tempestuous blast only serves to cause the oak to strike its roots more deeply in the earth. With minds originally constituted alike, and that constitution being based on a virtuous foundation, it was, indeed, to be expected that the lapse of years would only tend to strengthen their attachment. Nothing, in a word, could have exceeded the ardour of their sympathy with each other. The only happiness which this world could afford them was derived from the circumstance of being in each other's company; and the one looked forward to the possibility of being left alone, when the other was snatched away by death, with feelings of the deepest pain and apprehension. Their wish was, in subordination to the will of the Supreme Being, that as they had been so long united in life, so in death they might not be divided. Their wish was in one sense realized, though not in the sense they had desired. The pressure of want, aggravated by the increasing infirmities of the female, imposed on her the necessity of repairing to the workhouse. The husband would most willingly have followed, had they been permitted to live together when there, in the hope that they should, even in that miserable place, be able to assuage each other's griefs, as they had so often done before. That was a permission, however, which was not to be granted to

them. The husband therefore determined that he would live on a morsel of bread and a draught of cold water, where he was, rather than submit to the degradation of a workhouse, in which he would be separated from her who had been the partner of his joys and griefs for upward of half a century. The hour of parting came; and a sad and sorrowful hour it was to the aged couple. Who shall describe their feelings on the occasion? Who can even enter into those feelings? No one. They could only be conceived by themselves. The process of separation was as full of anguish to their mental nature as is the severance of a limb from the body to the physical constitution. And that separation was aggravated by the circumstance, that both felt a presentiment, so strong as to have all the force of a thorough conviction, that their separation was to be final as regarded this world. What, then, must have been the agonies of the parting hour in the case of a couple whose mental powers were still unimpaired, and who had lived in the most perfect harmony for the protracted period of fifty years? They were, I repeat, not only such as admit of no description, but no one, who has not been similarly circumstanced, can even form an idea of them. The downcast look, the tender glances they emitted to each other, the swimming eye, the moist cheek, the deep-drawn sigh, the choked utterance, the affectionate embrace—all told, in the language of resistless eloquence, of the anguish caused by their separation. The scene was affecting in the extreme, even to the mere spectator. It was one which must have softened the hardest heart, as it drew tears from every eye which witnessed it; what, then, must the actual realization of it in all its power have been to the parties themselves? The separation did take place; the poor woman was wrenched from the almost death-like grasp of her husband. She was transferred to the workhouse; and he was left alone in the miserable hovel in which they had so long remained together. And what followed? What followed! That may be soon told: it is a short history. The former pined away, and died in three weeks after the separation; and the husband only survived three weeks more. Their parting was thus but for a short time, though final as

regarded this world. Ere six weeks had elapsed they again met together—

> Met on that happy, happy shore,
> Where friends do meet to part no more."

Here was an outrage, shocking to every heart of ordinary sensibility, committed by authority of the British government, in due execution of its "charitable enactments." In searching for a parallel, we can only find it among those savage tribes who kill their aged and infirm brethren to save trouble and expense. Yet such actions are sanctioned by the government of a civilized nation, in the middle of the nineteenth century; and that, too, when the government is parading its philanthropy in the face of the world, and, pharisaically, thanking God that it is not as other nations are, authorizing sin and wrong.

It was said by the advocates of this regulation of separation, that paupers themselves have no objection to be separated from each other; because, generally speaking, they have become old and unable to assist each other, before they throw themselves permanently on the parish—in other words, that the poor have not the same affection for relatives and friends that the wealthy have. Well, that argument was characteristic of a land where the fineness of a man's feelings are assumed to be exactly in proportion to the position of his ancestry and the length of his purse—perfectly in keeping, as an artist would say. A pauper husband

and wife, after living together, perhaps for thirty years, become old and desire to be separated, according to the representations of the British aristocrat. His iron logic allows no hearts to the poor. To breathe is human—to feel is aristocratic.

Equally to be condemned is the regulation which prohibits the visits to the workhouse of the friends of the inmates. The only shadow of a reason for this is an alleged inconvenience attending the admission of those persons who are not inmates; and for such a reason the wife is prevented from seeing her husband, the children from seeing their father, and the poor heart-broken inmate from seeing a friend—perhaps the only one he has in the world. We might suppose that the authors of this regulation had discovered that adversity multiplies friends, instead of driving them away from its gloom. Paupers must be blessed beyond the rest of mankind in that respect. Instances are recorded in which dying paupers have been refused the consolation of a last visit from their children, under the operation of this outrageous law. Mr. James Grant mentions a case that came to his notice:—

"An instance occurred a few months since in a workhouse in the suburbs of the metropolis, in which intelligence was accidentally conveyed to a daughter that her father was on his death-bed; she hurried that moment to the workhouse, but was refused admission. With tears in her eyes, and a heart that was ready to break, she pleaded the urgency of the case. The functionary was deaf to her entreaties; as soon might she have addressed

them to the brick wall before her. His answer was, 'It is contrary to the regulations of the place; come again at a certain hour.' She applied to the medical gentleman who attended the workhouse, and through his exertions obtained admission. She flew to the ward in which her father was confined: he lay cold, motionless, and unconscious before her—his spirit was gone; he had breathed his last five minutes before. Well may we exclaim, when we hear of such things, 'Do we live in a Christian country? Is this a civilized land?'"

Certainly, Mr. Grant, it is a land of freedom and philanthropy unknown upon the rest of the earth's surface.

From a survey of the poor-laws it appears that poverty is considered criminal in Great Britain. The workhouses, which are declared to have been established for the relief of the poor, are worse than prisons for solitary confinement; for the visits of friends and the consolations of religion, except under particular forms, are denied to the unhappy inmates, while they are permitted to the criminal in his dungeon.

What an English pauper is may be learned from the following description of the "bold peasantry," which we extract from one of the countless pamphlets on pauperism written by Englishmen.

"What is that defective being, with calfless legs and stooping shoulders, weak in body and mind, inert, pusillanimous and stupid, whose premature wrinkles and furtive glance tell of misery and degradation? That is an English peasant or pauper; for the words are synonymous. His sire was a pauper, and his mother's milk wanted nourishment. From infancy his food has been bad, as well as insufficient; and he now feels the pains of unsatisfied hunger nearly whenever he is awake. But half-

clothed, and never supplied with more warmth than suffices to cook his scanty meals, cold and wet come to him, and stay by him, with the weather. He is married, of course; for to this he would have been driven by the poor-laws, even if he had been, as he never was, sufficiently comfortable and prudent to dread the burden of a family. But, though instinct and the overseer have given him a wife, he has not tasted the highest joys of husband and father. His partner and his little ones being, like himself, often hungry, seldom warm, sometimes sick without aid, and always sorrowful without hope, are greedy, selfish, and vexing; so, to use his own expression, he 'hates the sight of them,' and resorts to his hovel only because a hedge affords less shelter from the wind and rain. Compelled by parish law to support his family, which means to join them in consuming an allowance from the parish, he frequently conspires with his wife to get that allowance increased, or prevent its being diminished. This brings begging, trickery, and quarrelling; and ends in settled craft. Though he has the inclination he wants the courage to become, like more energetic men of his class, a poacher or smuggler on a large scale; but he pilfers occasionally, and teaches his children to lie and steal. His subdued and slavish manner toward his great neighbours shows that they treat him with suspicion and harshness. Consequently he at once dreads and hates them; but he will never harm them by violent means. Too degraded to be desperate, he is only thoroughly depraved. His miserable career will be short; rheumatism and asthma are conducting him to the workhouse, where he will breathe his last without one pleasant recollection, and so make room for another wretch, who may live and die in the same way. This is a sample of one class of English peasants. Another class is composed of men who, though paupers to the extent of being in part supported by the parish, were not bred and born in extreme destitution, and [redacted], therefore, in so far as the moral depends on the physical man, are qualified to become wise, virtuous, and happy. They have large muscles, an upright mien, and a quick perception. With strength, energy, and skill, they would earn a comfortable subsistence as labourers, if the modern fashion of paying

wages out of the poor-box did not interfere with the due course of things, and reduce all the labourers of a parish, the old and the young, the weak and the strong, the idle and the industrious, to that lowest rate of wages, or rather of weekly payment to each, which, in each case, is barely sufficient for the support of life. If there were no poor-laws, or if the poor-laws were such that labour was paid in proportion to the work performed, and not according to a scale founded on the power of gastric juice under various circumstances, these superior men would be employed in preference to the inferior beings described above, would earn twice as much as the others could earn, and would have every motive for industry, providence, and general good conduct. As it is, their superior capacity as labourers is of no advantage to them. They have no motive for being industrious or prudent. What they obtain between labour and the rate is but just enough to support them miserably. They are tempted to marry for the sake of an extra allowance from the parish: and they would be sunk to the lowest point of degradation but for the energy of their minds, which they owe to their physical strength. Courage and tenderness are said to be allied: men of this class usually make good husbands and affectionate parents. Impelled by want of food, clothes, and warmth, for themselves and their families, they become poachers wherever game abounds, and smugglers when opportunity serves. By poaching or smuggling, or both, many of them are enabled to fill the bellies of their children, to put decent clothes on the backs of their wives, and to keep the cottage whole, with a good fire in it, from year's end to year's end. The villains! why are they not taken up? They are taken up sometimes, and are hunted always, by those who administer rural law. In this way they learn to consider two sets of laws—those for the protection of game, and those for the protection of home manufactures—as specially made for their injury. Be just to our unpaid magistrates! who perform their duty, even to the shedding of man's blood, in defence of pheasants and restrictions on trade. Thus the bolder sort of husbandry labourers, by engaging in murderous conflicts with gamekeepers and preventive men, become accustomed to deeds of violence,

and, by living in jails, qualified for the most desperate courses. They also imbibe feelings of dislike, or rather of bitter hatred, toward the rural magistracy, whom they regard as oppressors and natural enemies; closely resembling, in this respect, the defective class of peasants from whom they differ in so many particulars. Between these two descriptions of peasantry there is another, which partakes of the characteristics of both classes, but in a slighter degree, except as regards their fear and hatred of the rural aristocracy. In the districts where paupers and game abound, it would be difficult to find many labourers not coming under one of these descriptions. By courtesy, the entire body is called the bold peasantry of England. But is nothing done by the 'nobility, clergy, and gentry,' to conciliate the affection of the pauper mass, by whose toil all their own wealth is produced? Charity! The charity of the poor-laws, which paupers have been taught to consider a right, which operates as a curse to the able-bodied and well-disposed, while it but just enables the infirm of all ages to linger on in pain and sorrow. Soup! Dogs'-meat, the paupers call it. They are very ungrateful; but there is a way of relieving a man's necessities which will make him hate you; and it is in this way, generally, that soup is given to the poor. Books, good little books, which teach patience and submission to the powers that be! With which such paupers as obtain them usually boil their kettles, when not deterred by fear of the reverend donor. Of this gift the design is so plain and offensive, that its effect is contrary to what was intended, just as children from whom obedience is very strictly exacted are commonly rebels at heart. What else? is nothing else done by the rural rich to win the love of the rural poor? Speaking generally, since all rules have exceptions, the privileged classes of our rural districts take infinite pains to be abhorred by their poorest neighbours. They enclose commons. They stop footpaths. They wall in their parks. They set spring-guns and man-traps. They spend on the keep of high-bred dogs what would support half as many children, and yet persecute a labouring man for owning one friend in his cur. They make rates of wages, elaborately calculating the minimum of food that will keep together the soul

and body of a clodhopper. They breed game in profusion for their own amusement, and having thus tempted the poor man to knock down a hare for his pot, they send him to the tread-mill, or the antipodes, for that inexpiable offence. They build jails, and fill them. They make new crimes and new punishments for the poor. They interfere with the marriages of the poor, compelling some, and forbidding others, to come together. They shut up paupers in workhouses, separating husband and wife, in pounds by day and wards by night. They harness poor men to carts. They superintend alehouses, decry skittles, deprecate beer-shops, meddle with fairs, and otherwise curtail the already narrow amusements of the poor. Even in church, where some of them solemnly preach that all are equal, they sit on cushions, in pews boarded, matted, and sheltered by curtains from the wind and the vulgar gaze, while the lower order must put up with a bare bench on a stone floor, which is good enough for them. Everywhere they are ostentatious in the display of wealth and enjoyment; while, in their intercourse with the poor, they are suspicious, quick at taking offence, vindictive when displeased, haughty, overbearing, tyrannical, and wolfish; as it seems in the nature of man to be toward such of his fellows as, like sheep, are without the power to resist."

In London, a species of slavery pertains to the workhouse system which has justly excited much indignation. This is the employment of paupers as scavengers in the streets, without due compensation, and compelling them to wear badges, as if they were convicted criminals. Mr. Mayhew has some judicious remarks upon this subject:—

"If pauperism be a disgrace, then it is unjust to turn a man into the public thoroughfare, wearing the badge of beggary, to be pointed at and scorned for his poverty, especially when we are growing so particularly studious of our criminals that we make

them wear masks to prevent even their faces being seen.* Nor is it consistent with the principles of an enlightened national morality that we should force a body of honest men to labour upon the highways, branded with a degrading garb, like convicts. Neither is it *wise* to do so, for the shame of poverty soon becomes deadened by the repeated exposure to public scorn; and thus the occasional recipient of parish relief is ultimately converted into the hardened and habitual pauper. "Once a pauper always a pauper," I was assured was the parish rule; and here lies the *rationale* of the fact. Not long ago this system of employing *badged* paupers to labour on the public thoroughfares was carried to a much more offensive extent than it is even at present. At one time the pauper labourers of a certain parish had the attention of every passer-by attracted to them while at their work, for on the back of each man's garb—a sort of smock frock—was marked, with sufficient prominence, 'CLERKENWELL. STOP IT!' This public intimation that the labourers were not only paupers, but regarded as thieves, and expected to purloin the parish dress they wore, attracted public attention, and was severely commented upon at a meeting. The 'STOP IT!' therefore was cancelled, and the frocks are now *merely* lettered 'CLERKENWELL.' Before the alteration the men very generally wore the garment inside out."

The pauper scavengers employed by the metropolitan parishes are divided into three classes: 1. The in-door paupers, who receive no wages whatever, their lodging, food, and clothing being considered to be sufficient remuneration for their labour; 2. The out-door paupers, who are paid partly in money and partly in kind, and employed in some cases three days, and in others six days in the week; 3. The unemployed labourers of the district, who are set to scavenging work

* This is done at the Model Prison, Pentonville.

by the parish and paid a regular money-wage—the employment being constant, and the rate of remuneration varying from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a day for each of the six days, or from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 15*s.* a week.

The first class of pauper-scavengers, or those who receive nothing for their labour beyond their lodging, food, and clothing, are treated as slaves. The labour is compulsory, without inducements for exertion, and conducted upon the same system which the authorities of the parish would use for working cattle. One of these scavengers gave the following account of this degrading labour to Mr. Mayhew:—

"'Street-sweeping,' he said, 'degrades a man, and if a man's poor he hasn't no call to be degraded. Why can't they set the thieves and pickpockets to sweep? they could be watched easy enough; there's always idle fellers as reckons theirselves real gents, as can be got for watching and sitch easy jobs, for they gets as much for them as three men's paid for hard work in a week. I never was in a prison, but I've heerd that people there is better fed and better cared for than in workusses. What's the meaning of that, sir, I'd like to know. You can't tell me, but I can tell you. The workus is made as ugly as it can be, that poor people may be got to leave it, and chance dying in the street rather.' [Here the man indulged in a gabbled detail of a series of pauper grievances which I had a difficulty in diverting or interrupting. On my asking if the other paupers had the same opinion as to the street-sweeping as he had, he replied:—] 'To be sure they has; all them that has sense to have a 'pinion at all has; there's not two sides to it anyhow. No, I don't want to be kept and do nothink. I want *proper* work. And by the rights of it I might as well be kept with nothink to do as —— or ——' [parish officials]. 'Have they nothing to do?' I asked. 'Nothink, but

to make mischief and get what ought to go to the poor. It's salaries and such like as swallers the rates, and that's what every poor family knows as knows any think. Did I ever like my work better? Certainly not. Do I take any pains with it? Well, where would be the good? I can sweep well enough, when I please, but if I could do more than the best man as ever Mr. Drake paid a pound a week to, it wouldn't be a bit better for me—not a bit, sir, I assure you. We all takes it easy whenever we can, but the work *must* be done. The only good about it is that you get outside the house. It's a change that way certainly. But we work like horses and is treated like asses.'"

The second mode of pauper scavenging, viz. that performed by out-door paupers, and paid for partly in money and partly in kind, is strongly condemned, as having mischievous and degrading tendencies. The men thus employed are certainly not independent labourers, though the means of their subsistence are partly the fruits of their toil. Their exceedingly scant payment keeps them hard at work for a very unreasonable period. Should they refuse to obey the parish regulations in regard to the work, the pangs of hunger are sure to reach them and compel them to submit. Death is the only door of escape. From a married man employed by the parish in this work, Mr. Mayhew obtained the following interesting narrative, which is a sad revelation of pauper slavery:—

"'I was brought up as a type-founder; my father, who was one, learnt me his trade; but he died when I was quite a young man, or I might have been better perfected in it. I was comfortably off enough then, and got married. Very soon after that I was

taken ill with an abscess in my neck, you can see the mark of it still.' [He showed me the mark.] 'For six months I wasn't able to do a thing, and I was a part of the time, I don't recollect how long, in St. Bartholomew's Hospital. I was weak and ill when I came out, and hardly fit for work; I couldn't hear of any work I could get, for there was a great bother in the trade between master and men. Before I went into the hospital, there was money to pay to doctors; and when I came out I could éarn nothing, so every thing went; yes, sir, every thing. My wife made a little matter with charing for families she'd lived in, but things are in a bad way if a poor woman has to keep her husband. She was taken ill at last, and then there was nothing but the parish for us. I suffered a great deal before it come to that. It was awful. No one can know what it is but them that suffers it. But I didn't know what in the world to do. We lived then in St. Luke's, and were passed to our own parish, and were three months in the workhouse. The living was good enough, better than it is now, I've heard, but I was miserable.' ['And I was *very* miserable,' interposed the wife, 'for I had been brought up comfortable; my father was a respectable tradesman in St. George's-in-the-East, and I had been in good situations.'] 'We made ourselves,' said the husband, 'as useful as we could, but we were parted of course. At the three months' end, I had 10*s.* given to me to come out with, and was told I might start costermongering on it. But to a man not up to the trade, 10*s.* won't go very far to keep up costering. I didn't feel master enough of my own trade by this time to try for work at it, and work wasn't at all regular. There were good hands earning only 12*s.* a week. The 10*s.* soon went, and I had again to apply for relief, and got an order for the stone-yard to go and break stones. Ten bushels was to be broken for 15*d.* It was dreadful hard work at first. My hands got all blistered and bloody, and I've gone home and cried with pain and wretchedness. At first it was on to three days before I could break the ten bushels. I felt shivered to bits all over my arms and shoulders, and my head was splitting. I then got to do it in two days, and then in one, and it grew easier. But all this time I had only what was reckoned three days' work in a week. That is, you see,

sir, I had only three times ten bushels of stones given to break in a week, and earned only 3*s.* 9*d.* Yes, I lived on it, and paid 1*s.* 6*d.* a week rent, for the neighbours took care of a few sticks for us, and the parish or a broker wouldn't have found them worth carriage. My wife was then in the country with a sister. I lived upon bread and dripping, went without fire or candle (or had one only very seldom) though it wasn't warm weather. I can safely say that for eight weeks I never tasted one bite of meat, and hardly a bite of butter. When I couldn't sleep of a night, but that wasn't often, it was terrible, very. I washed what bits of things I had then, myself, and had sometimes to get a ha'porth of soap as a favour, as the chandler said she 'didn't make less than a penn'orth.' If I ate too much dripping, it made me feel sick. I hardly know how much bread and dripping I ate in a week. I spent what money I had in it and bread, and sometimes went without. I was very weak, you may be sure, sir; and if I'd had the influenza or any thing that way, I should have gone off like a shot, for I seemed to have no constitution left. But my wife came back again and got work at charing, and made about 4*s.* a week at it; but we were still very badly off. Then I got to work on the roads every day, and had 1*s.* and a quartern loaf a day, which was a rise. I had only one child then, but men with larger families got two quartern loaves a day. Single men got 9*d.* a day. It was far easier work than stone-breaking too. The hours were from eight to five in winter, and from seven to six in summer. But there's always changes going on, and we were put on 1*s.* 1½*d.* a day and a quartern loaf, and only three days a week. All the same as to time of course. The bread wasn't good; it was only cheap. I suppose there was twenty of us working most of the times as I was. The gangsman, as you call him, but that's more for the regular hands, was a servant of the parish, and a great tyrant. Yes, indeed, when we had a talk among ourselves, there was nothing but grumbling heard of. Some of the tales I've heard were shocking; worse than what I've gone through. Everybody was grumbling, except perhaps two men that had been twenty years in the streets, and were like born paupers. They didn't feel it, for there's a great difference in men. They knew no better.

But anybody might have been frightened to hear some of the men talk and curse. We've stopped work to abuse the parish officers as might be passing. We've mobbed the overseers; and a number of us, I was one, were taken before the magistrate for it: but we told him how badly we were off, and he discharged us, and gave us orders into the workhouse, and told 'em to see if nothing could be done for us. We were there till next morning, and then sent away without any thing being said.'"

"'It's a sad life, sir, is a parish worker's. I wish to God I could get out of it. But when a man has children he can't stop and say, "I can't do this," and "I won't do that." Last week, now, in costering, I lost 6*s*. [he meant that his expenses, of every kind, exceeded his receipts by 6*s*.,] and though I can distil nectar, or any thing that way, [this was said somewhat laughingly,] it's only when the weather's hot and fine that any good at all can be done with it. I think, too, that there's not the money among working-men that there once was. Any thing regular in the way of pay must always be looked at by a man with a family.

"'Of course the streets must be properly swept, and if I can sweep them as well as Mr. Dodd's men, for I know one of them very well, why should I have only 1*s*. 4½*d*. a week and three loaves, and he have 16*s*., I think it is. I don't drink, my wife knows I don't, [the wife assented,] and it seems as if in a parish a man must be kept down when he is down, and then blamed for it. I may not understand all about it, but it looks queer.'"

The third system of parish work, where the labourer is employed regularly, and paid a certain sum out of the parochial fund, is superior to either of the other modes; but still, the labourers are very scantily paid, subjected to a great deal of tyranny by brutal officers, and miserably provided. They endure the severest toil for a wretched pittance, without being able to choose their masters or their employment. No slaves could be more completely at the mercy of their masters.

The common practice of apprenticing children born and reared in workhouses, to masters who may feed, clothe, and beat them as they please, is touchingly illustrated in Dickens's famous story of Oliver Twist. After Oliver had been subjected for some time to the tender mercies of guardians and overseers in the workhouse, it was advertised that any person wanting an apprentice could obtain him, and five pounds as a premium. He narrowly escaped being apprenticed to a sweep, and finally fell into the hands of Mr. Sowerberry, an undertaker. In the house of that dismal personage, he was fed upon cold bits, badly clothed, knocked about unmercifully, and worked with great severity. Such is the common fate of parish apprentices; and we do not think a more truthful conception of the *beauties* of the system could be conveyed than by quoting from the experience of Dickens's workhouse boy:—

"Oliver had not been within the walls of the workhouse a quarter of an hour, and had scarcely completed the demolition of a second slice of bread, when Mr. Bumble, who had handed him over to the care of an old woman, returned, and, telling him it was a board night, informed him that the board had said he was to appear before it forthwith.

"Not having a very clearly defined notion what a live board was, Oliver was rather astounded by this intelligence, and was not quite certain whether he ought to laugh or cry. He had no time to think about the matter, however; for Mr. Bumble gave him a tap on the head with his cane to wake him up, and another on his back to make him lively, and, bidding him follow, conducted him into a large whitewashed room, where eight or ten fat gentlemen were sitting round a table, at the top of which, seated in an arm-

chair rather higher than the rest, was a particularly fat gentleman with a very round, red face.

"'Bow to the board,' said Bumble. Oliver brushed away two or three tears that were lingering in his eyes, and seeing no board but the table, fortunately bowed to that.

"'What's your name, boy?' said the gentleman in the high chair.

"Oliver was frightened at the sight of so many gentlemen, which made him tremble: and the beadle gave him another tap behind, which made him cry; and these two causes made him answer in a very low and hesitating voice; whereupon a gentleman in a white waistcoat said he was a fool, which was a capital way of raising his spirit, and putting him quite at his ease.

"'Boy,' said the gentleman in the high chair: 'listen to me. You know you're an orphan, I suppose?"

"'What's that, sir?" inquired poor Oliver.

"'The boy *is* a fool—I thought he was,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat in a very decided tone. If one member of a class be blessed with an intuitive perception of others of the same race, the gentleman in the white waistcoat was unquestionably well qualified to pronounce an opinion on the matter.

"'Hush!' said the gentleman who had spoken first. 'You know you've got no father or mother, and that you are brought up by the parish, don't you?'

"'Yes, sir,' replied Oliver, weeping bitterly.

"'What are you crying for?' inquired the gentleman in the white waistcoat; and to be sure it was very extraordinary. What *could* he be crying for?

"'I hope you say your prayers every night,' said another gentleman in a gruff voice, 'and pray for the people who feed you, and take care of you, like a Christian.'

"'Yes, sir,' stammered the boy. The gentleman who spoke last was unconsciously right. It would have been *very* like a Christian, and a marvellously good Christian, too, if Oliver had prayed for the people who fed and took care of *him*. But he hadn't, because nobody had taught him.

"'Well you have come here to be educated, and taught a useful trade,' said the red-faced gentleman in the high chair.

"'So you'll begin to pick oakum to-morrow morning at six o'clock,' added the surly one in the white waistcoat.

"For the combination of both these blessings in the one simple process of picking oakum, Oliver bowed low by the direction of the beadle, and was then hurried away to a large ward, where, on a rough hard bed, he sobbed himself to sleep. What a noble illustration of the tender laws of this favoured country! they let the paupers go to sleep!

"Poor Oliver! he little thought, as he lay sleeping in happy unconsciousness of all around him, that the board had that very day arrived at a decision which would exercise the most material influence over all his future fortunes. But they had. And this was it:—

"The members of this board were very sage, deep, philosophical men; and when they came to turn their attention to the workhouse, they found out at once, what ordinary folks would never have discovered,—the poor people liked it! It was a regular place of public entertainment for the poorer classes,—a tavern where there was nothing to pay,—a public breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper, all the year round,—a brick and mortar elysium, where it was all play and no work. 'Oho!' said the board, looking very knowing; 'we are the fellows to set this to rights; we'll stop it all in no time.' So they established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they,) of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. With this view, they contracted with the water-works to lay on an unlimited supply of water, and with a corn-factor to supply periodically small quantities of oat-meal: and issued three meals of thin gruel a-day, with an onion twice a week, and half a roll on Sundays. They made a great many other wise and humane regulations having reference to the ladies, which it is not necessary to repeat; kindly undertook to divorce poor married people, in consequence of the great expense of a suit in Doctors' Commons; and, instead of compelling a man to support his family, as they had theretofore done, took his family away from him, and made him a bachelor! There is no telling how many applicants for relief under these last two heads would not

have started up in all classes of society, if it had not been coupled with the workhouse. But they were long-headed men, and they had provided for this difficulty. The relief was inseparable from the workhouse and the gruel; and that frightened people.

"For the first three months after Oliver Twist was removed, the system was in full operation. It was rather expensive at first, in consequence of the increase in the undertaker's bill, and the necessity of taking in the clothes of all the paupers, which fluttered loosely on their wasted, shrunken forms, after a week or two's gruel. But the number of workhouse inmates got thin, as well as the paupers; and the board were in ecstasies. The room in which the boys were fed was a large stone hall, with a copper at one end, out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at meal-times; of which composition each boy had one porringer, and no more,—except on festive occasions, and then he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides. The bowls never wanted washing—the boys polished them with their spoons, till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation, (which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls,) they would sit staring at the copper with such eager eyes, as if they could devour the very bricks of which it was composed; employing themselves meanwhile in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon. Boys have generally excellent appetites: Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months; at last they got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing, (for his father had kept a small cook's shop,) hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel *per diem*, he was afraid he should some night eat the boy who slept next him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild, hungry eye, and they implicitly believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived: the boys took their places; the master, in

his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out, and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared, and the boys whispered to each other and winked at Oliver, while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table, and, advancing, basin and spoon in hand, to the master, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity—

"'Please, sir, I want some more.'

"The master was a fat, healthy man, but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralyzed with wonder, and the boys with fear.

"'What!' said the master at length, in a faint voice.

"'Please, sir,' replied Oliver, 'I want some more.'

"The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle, pinioned him in his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

"The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said—

"'Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir;—Oliver Twist has asked for more.' There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

"'For *more!*' said Mr. Limbkins. 'Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?'

"'He did, sir,' replied Bumble.

"'That boy will be hung,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat; 'I know that boy will be hung.'

"Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman's opinion. An animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish; in other words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

"'I never was more convinced of any thing in my life,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat, as he knocked at the gate and read the bill next morning,—'I never was more convinced of any thing in my life, than I am that that boy will come to be hung.'

"For a week after the commission of the impious and profane offence of asking for more, Oliver remained a close prisoner in the dark and solitary room to which he had been consigned by the wisdom and mercy of the board. It appears, at first sight, not unreasonable to suppose, that, if he had entertained a becoming feeling of respect for the prediction of the gentleman in the white waistcoat, he would have established that sage individual's prophetic character, once and for ever, by tying one end of his pocket-handkerchief to a hook in the wall, and attaching himself to the other. To the performance of this feat, however, there was one obstacle, namely, that pocket-handkerchiefs being decided articles of luxury, had been, for all future times and ages, removed from the noses of paupers by the express order of the board in council assembled, solemnly given and pronounced under their hands and seals. There was a still greater obstacle in Oliver's youth and childishness. He only cried bitterly all day; and when the long, dismal night came on, he spread his little hands before his eyes to shut out the darkness, and crouching in the corner, tried to sleep, ever and anon waking with a start and tremble, and drawing himself closer and closer to the wall, as if to feel even its cold hard surface were a protection in the gloom and loneliness which surrounded him.

"Let it not be supposed by the enemies of 'the system,' that, during the period of his solitary incarceration, Oliver was denied the benefit of exercise, the pleasure of society, or the advantages of religious consolation. As for exercise, it was nice cold weather, and he was allowed to perform his ablutions every morning under the pump, in a stone yard, in the presence of Mr. Bumble, who prevented his catching cold, and caused a tingling sensation to pervade his frame, by repeated applications of the cane; as for society, he was carried every other day into the hall where the boys dined, and there sociably flogged, as a public warning and

example; and, so far from being denied the advantages of religious consolation, he was kicked into the same apartment every evening at prayer-time, and there permitted to listen to, and console his mind with, a general supplication of the boys, containing a special clause therein inserted by the authority of the board, in which they entreated to be made good, virtuous, contented, and obedient, and to be guarded from the sins and vices of Oliver Twist, whom the supplication distinctly set forth to be under the exclusive patronage and protection of the powers of wickedness, and an article direct from the manufactory of the devil himself.

"It chanced one morning, while Oliver's affairs were in this auspicious and comfortable state, that Mr. Gamfield, chimney-sweeper, was wending his way adown the High-street, deeply cogitating in his mind his ways and means of paying certain arrears of rent, for which his landlord had become rather pressing. Mr. Gamfield's most sanguine calculation of funds could not raise them within full five pounds of the desired amount; and, in a species of arithmetical desperation, he was alternately cudgelling his brains and his donkey, when, passing the workhouse, his eyes encountered the bill on the gate.

"'Woo!' said Mr. Gamfield to the donkey.

"The donkey was in a state of profound abstraction—wondering, probably, whether he was destined to be regaled with a cabbage-stalk or two, when he had disposed of the two sacks of soot with which the little cart was laden; so, without noticing the word of command, he jogged onward.

"Mr. Gamfield growled a fierce imprecation on the donkey generally, but more particularly on his eyes; and running after him, bestowed a blow on his head which would inevitably have beaten in any skull but a donkey's; then, catching hold of the bridle, he gave his jaw a sharp wrench, by way of gentle reminder that he was not his own master; and, having by these means turned him round, he gave him another blow on the head, just to stun him until he came back again; and, having done so, walked to the gate to read the bill.

"The gentleman with the white waistcoat was standing at the

gate with his hands behind him, after having delivered himself of some profound sentiments in the board-room. Having witnessed the little dispute between Mr. Gamfield and the donkey, he smiled joyously when that person came up to read the bill, for he saw at once that Mr. Gamfield was just exactly the sort of master Oliver Twist wanted. Mr. Gamfield smiled, too, as he perused the document, for five pounds was just the sum he had been wishing for; and, as to the boy with which it was encumbered, Mr. Gamfield, knowing what the dietary of the workhouse was, well knew he would be a nice small pattern, just the very thing for register stoves. So he spelt the bill through again, from beginning to end; and then, touching his fur cap in token of humility, accosted the gentleman in the white waistcoat.

"'This here boy, sir, wot the parish wants to 'prentis,' said Mr. Gamfield.

"'Yes, my man,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat, with a condescending smile, 'what of him?'

"'If the parish vould like him to learn a light, pleasant trade, in a good 'spectable chimbley-sweepin bisness,' said Mr. Gamfield, 'I wants a 'prentis, and I'm ready to take him.'

"'Walk in,' said the gentleman with the white waistcoat. And Mr. Gamfield having lingered behind, to give the donkey another blow on the head, and another wrench of the jaw, as a caution not to run away in his absence, followed the gentleman in the white waistcoat into the room where Oliver had first seen him.

"'It's a nasty trade,' said Mr. Limbkins, when Gamfield had again stated his case.

"'Young boys have been smothered in chimeys, before now,' said another gentleman.

"'That's acause they damped the straw afore they lit it in the chimbley to make 'em come down again,' said Gamfield; 'that's all smoke, and no blaze; 'vereas smoke a'n't o' no use at all in makin' a boy come down; it only sinds him to sleep, and that's wot he likes. Boys is wery obstinit, and wery lazy, gen'lm'n, and there's nothink like a good hot blaze to make 'em come down vith a run; it's humane, too, gen'lm'n, acause, even if they've

stuck in the chimbley, roastin' their feet makes 'em struggle to hextricate theirselves.'

"The gentleman in the white waistcoat appeared very much amused with this explanation; but his mirth was speedily checked by a look from Mr. Limbkins. The board then proceeded to converse among themselves for a few minutes, but in so low a tone that the words, 'saving of expenditure,' 'look well in the accounts,' 'have a printed report published,' were alone audible; and they only chanced to be heard on account of their being very frequently repeated with great emphasis.

"At length the whispering ceased, and the members of the board having resumed their seats and their solemnity, Mr. Limbkins said,

"'We have considered your proposition, and we don't approve of it.'

"'Not at all,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat.

"'Decidedly not,' added the other members.

"As Mr. Gamfield did happen to labour under the slight imputation of having bruised three or four boys to death already, it occurred to him that the board had perhaps, in some unaccountable freak, taken it into their heads that this extraneous circumstance ought to influence their proceedings. It was very unlike their general mode of doing business, if they had; but still, as he had no particular wish to revive the rumour, he twisted his cap in his hands, and walked slowly from the table.

"'So you won't let me have him, gen'lmen,' said Mr. Gamfield, pausing near the door.

"'No,' replied Mr. Limbkins; 'at least, as it's a nasty business, we think you ought to take something less than the premium we offered.'

"Mr. Gamfield's countenance brightened, as with a quick step he returned to the table, and said,

"'What'll you give, gen'lmen? Come, don't be too hard on a poor man. What'll you give?'

"'I should say three pound ten was plenty,' said Mr. Limbkins.

"'Ten shillings too much,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat.

"'Come,' said Gamfield, 'say four pound, gen'lmen. Say four pound, and you've got rid of him for good and all. There!'

"'Three pound ten,' repeated Mr. Limbkins, firmly.

"'Come, I'll split the difference, gen'lmen,' urged Gamfield. 'Three pound fifteen.'

"'Not a farthing more,' was the firm reply of Mr. Limbkins.

"'You're desp'rate hard upon me, gen'lmen,' said Gamfield, wavering.

"'Pooh! pooh! nonsense!' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. 'He'd be cheap with nothing at all as a premium. Take him, you silly fellow! He's just the boy for you. He wants the stick now and then; it'll do him good; and his board needn't come very expensive, for he hasn't been overfed since he was born. Ha! ha! ha!'

"Mr. Gamfield gave an arch look at the faces round the table, and, observing a smile on all of them, gradually broke into a smile himself. The bargain was made, and Mr. Bumble was at once instructed that Oliver Twist and his indentures were to be conveyed before the magistrate for signature and approval, that very afternoon.

"In pursuance of this determination, little Oliver, to his excessive astonishment, was released from bondage, and ordered to put himself into a clean shirt. He had hardly achieved this very unusual gymnastic performance, when Mr. Bumble brought him with his own hands, a basin of gruel, and the holiday allowance of two ounces and a quarter of bread; at sight of which Oliver began to cry very piteously, thinking, not unnaturally, that the board must have determined to kill him for some useful purpose, or they never would have begun to fatten him up in this way.

"'Don't make your eyes red, Oliver, but eat your food, and be thankful,' said Mr. Bumble, in a tone of impressive pomposity. 'You're a-going to be made a 'prentice of, Oliver.'

"'A 'prentice, sir!' said the child, trembling.

"'Yes, Oliver,' said Mr. Bumble. 'The kind and blessed gentlemen which is so many parents to you, Oliver, when you have

none of your own, are a-going to 'prentice you, and to set you up in life, and make a man of you, although the expense to the parish is three pound ten!—three pound ten, Oliver!—seventy shillin's!—one hundred and forty sixpences!—and all for a naughty orphan which nobody can love.'

"As Mr. Bumble paused to take breath after delivering this address, in an awful voice, the tears rolled down the poor child's face, and he sobbed bitterly.

"'Come,' said Mr. Bumble, somewhat less pompously; for it was gratifying to his feelings to observe the effect his eloquence had produced. 'Come, Oliver, wipe your eyes with the cuffs of your jacket, and don't cry into your gruel; that's a very foolish action, Oliver.' It certainly was, for there was quite enough water in it already.

"On their way to the magistrate's, Mr. Bumble instructed Oliver that all he would have to do would be to look very happy, and say, when the gentleman asked him if he wanted to be apprenticed, that he should like it very much indeed; both of which injunctions Oliver promised to obey, the more readily as Mr. Bumble threw in a gentle hint, that if he failed in either particular, there was no telling what would be done to him. When they arrived at the office he was shut up in a little room by himself, and admonished by Mr. Bumble to stay there until he came back to fetch him.

"There the boy remained with a palpitating heart for half an hour, at the expiration of which time Mr. Bumble thrust in his head, unadorned with the cocked hat, and said aloud,

"'Now, Oliver, my dear, come to the gentleman.' As Mr. Bumble said this, he put on a grim and threatening look, and added in a low voice, 'Mind what I told you, you young rascal.'

"Oliver stared innocently in Mr. Bumble's face at this somewhat contradictory style of address; but that gentleman prevented his offering any remark thereupon, by leading him at once into an adjoining room, the door of which was open. It was a large room with a great window; and behind a desk sat two old gentlemen with powdered heads, one of whom was reading the newspaper, while the other was perusing, with the aid of a pair

of tortoise-shell spectacles, a small piece of parchment which lay before him. Mr. Limbkins was standing in front of the desk, on one side; and Mr. Gamfield, with a partially washed face, on the other; while two or three bluff-looking men in top-boots were lounging about.

"The old gentleman with the spectacles gradually dozed off, over the little bit of parchment; and there was a short pause after Oliver had been stationed by Mr. Bumble in front of the desk.

"'This is the boy, your worship,' said Mr. Bumble.

"The old gentleman who was reading the newspaper raised his head for a moment, and pulled the other old gentleman by the sleeve, whereupon the last-mentioned old gentleman woke up.

"'Oh, is this the boy?' said the old gentleman.

"'This is him, sir,' replied Mr. Bumble. 'Bow to the magistrate, my dear.'

"Oliver roused himself, and made his best obeisance. He had been wondering, with his eyes fixed on the magistrate's powder, whether all boards were born with that white stuff on their heads, and were boards from thenceforth, on that account.

"'Well,' said the old gentleman, 'I suppose he's fond of chimney-sweeping?'

"'He dotes on it, your worship,' replied Bumble, giving Oliver a sly pinch, to intimate that he had better not say he didn't.

"'And he *will* be a sweep, will he?' inquired the old gentleman.

"'If we was to bind him to any other trade to-morrow, he'd run away simultaneously, your worship,' replied Bumble.

"'And this man that's to be his master,—you, sir,—you'll treat him well, and feed him, and do all that sort of thing,—will you?' said the old gentleman.

"'When I says I will, I means I will,' replied Mr. Gamfield, doggedly.

"'You're a rough speaker, my friend, but you look an honest, open-hearted man,' said the old gentleman, turning his spectacles in the direction of the candidate for Oliver's premium, whose villanous countenance was a regular stamped receipt for cruelty.

But the magistrate was half blind, and half childish, so he couldn't reasonably be expected to discern what other people did.

"'I hope I am, sir,' said Mr. Gamfield with an ugly leer.

"'I have no doubt you are, my friend,' replied the old gentleman, fixing his spectacles more firmly on his nose, and looking about him for the inkstand.

"It was the critical moment of Oliver's fate. If the inkstand had been where the old gentleman thought it was, he would have dipped his pen into it and signed the indentures, and Oliver would have been straightway hurried off. But, as it chanced to be immediately under his nose, it followed as a matter of course, that he looked all over his desk for it, without finding it; and happening in the course of his search to look straight before him, his gaze encountered the pale and terrified face of Oliver Twist, who, despite of all the admonitory looks and pinches of Bumble, was regarding the very repulsive countenance of his future master with a mingled expression of horror and fear, too palpable to be mistaken even by a half-blind magistrate.

"The old gentleman stopped, laid down his pen, and looked from Oliver to Mr. Limbkins, who attempted to take snuff with a cheerful and unconcerned aspect.

"'My boy,' said the old gentleman, leaning over the desk. Oliver started at the sound,—he might be excused for doing so, for the words were kindly said, and strange sounds frighten one. He trembled violently, and burst into tears.

"'My boy,' said the old gentleman, 'you look pale and alarmed. What is the matter?'

"'Stand a little away from him, beadle,' said the other magistrate, laying aside the paper and leaning forward with an expression of some interest. 'Now, boy, tell us what's the matter; don't be afraid.'

"Oliver fell on his knees, and, clasping his hands together, prayed that they would order him back to the dark room—that they would starve him—beat him—kill him if they pleased, rather than send him away with that dreadful man.

"'Well!' said Mr. Bumble, raising his hands and eyes with most impressive solemnity—'Well! of *all* the artful and design-

ing orphans that ever I see, Oliver, you are one of the most barefacedest.'

"'Hold your tongue, beadle,' said the second old gentleman, when Mr. Bumble had given vent to this compound adjective.

"'I beg your worship's pardon,' said Mr. Bumble, incredulous of his having heard aright—'did your worship speak to me?'

"'Yes—hold your tongue.'

"Mr. Bumble was stupefied with astonishment. A beadle ordered to hold his tongue! A moral revolution.

"The old gentleman in the tortoise-shell spectacles looked at his companion; he nodded significantly.

"'We refuse to sanction these indentures,' said the old gentleman, tossing aside the piece of parchment as he spoke.

"'I hope,' stammered Mr. Limbkins—'I hope the magistrates will not form the opinion that the authorities have been guilty of any improper conduct, on the unsupported testimony of a mere child.'

"'The magistrates are not called upon to pronounce any opinion on the matter,' said the second old gentleman, sharply. 'Take the boy back to the workhouse and treat him kindly; he seems to want it.'

"That same evening the gentleman in the white waistcoat most positively and decidedly affirmed, not only that Oliver would be hung, but that he would be drawn and quartered into the bargain. Mr. Bumble shook his head with gloomy mystery, and said he wished he might come to good: to which Mr. Gamfield replied that he wished he might come to him, which, although he agreed with the beadle in most matters, would seem to be a wish of a totally opposite description.

"The next morning the public were once more informed that Oliver Twist was again to let, and that five pounds would be paid to anybody who would take possession of him.

"In great families, when an advantageous place cannot be obtained, either in possession, reversion, remainder, or expectancy, for the young man who is growing up, it is a very general custom to send him to sea. The board, in imitation of so wise and salutary an example, took counsel together on the expediency of ship-

ping off Oliver Twist in some small trading-vessel bound to a good unhealthy port, which suggested itself as the very best thing that could possibly be done with him; the probability being that the skipper would either flog him to death in a playful mood, some day after dinner, or knock his brains out with an iron bar, both pastimes being, as is pretty generally known, very favourite and common recreations among gentlemen of that class. The more the case presented itself to the board in this point of view, the more manifold the advantages of the step appeared; so they came to the conclusion that the only way of providing for Oliver effectually, was to send him to sea without delay.

"Mr. Bumble had been despatched to make various preliminary inquiries, with the view of finding out some captain or other who wanted a cabin-boy without any friends; and was returning to the workhouse to communicate the result of his mission, when he encountered just at the gate no less a person than Mr. Sowerberry, the parochial undertaker.

"Mr. Sowerberry was a tall, gaunt, large-jointed man, attired in a suit of threadbare black, with darned cotton stockings of the same colour, and shoes to answer. His features were not naturally intended to wear a smiling aspect, but he was in general rather given to professional jocosity; his step was elastic, and his face betokened inward pleasantry as he advanced to Mr. Bumble and shook him cordially by the hand.

"'I have taken the measure of the two women that died last night, Mr. Bumble,' said the undertaker.

"'You'll make your fortune, Mr. Sowerberry,' said the beadle, as he thrust his thumb and forefinger into the proffered snuff-box of the undertaker, which was an ingenious little model of a patent coffin. 'I say you'll make your fortune, Mr. Sowerberry,' repeated Mr. Bumble, tapping the undertaker on the shoulder in a friendly manner with his cane.

"'Think so?' said the undertaker in a tone which half admitted and half disputed the probability of the event. 'The prices allowed by the board are very small, Mr. Bumble.'

"'So are the coffins,' replied the beadle, with precisely as near an approach to a laugh as a great official ought to indulge in.

"Mr. Sowerberry was much tickled at this, as of course he ought to be, and laughed a long time without cessation. 'Well, well, Mr. Bumble,' he said at length, 'there's no denying that, since the new system of feeding has come in, the coffins are something narrower and more shallow than they used to be; but we must have some profit, Mr. Bumble. Well-seasoned timber is an expensive article, sir; and all the iron handles come by canal from Birmingham.'

"'Well, well,' said Mr. Bumble, 'every trade has its drawbacks, and a fair profit is of course allowable.'

"'Of course, of course,' replied the undertaker; 'and if I don't get a profit upon this or that particular article, why I make it up in the long run, you see—he! he! he!'

"'Just so,' said Mr. Bumble.

"'Though I must say,'—continued the undertaker, resuming the current of observations which the beadle had interrupted,—'though I must say, Mr. Bumble, that I have to contend against one very great disadvantage, which is, that all the stout people go off the quickest—I mean that the people who have been better off, and have paid rates for many years, are the first to sink when they come into the house; and let me tell you, Mr. Bumble, that three or four inches over one's calculation makes a great hole in one's profits, especially when one has a family to provide for, sir.'

"As Mr. Sowerberry said this, with the becoming indignation of an ill-used man, and as Mr. Bumble felt that it rather tended to convey a reflection on the honour of the parish, the latter gentleman thought it advisable to change the subject; and Oliver Twist being uppermost in his mind, he made him his theme.

"'By-the-by,' said Mr. Bumble, 'you don't know anybody who wants a boy, do you—a parochial 'prentis, who is at present a dead-weight—a millstone, as I may say—round the parochial throat? Liberal terms, Mr. Sowerberry—liberal terms;' and, as Mr. Bumble spoke, he raised his cane to the bill above him and gave three distinct raps upon the words 'five pounds,' which were printed therein in Roman capitals of gigantic size.

"'Gadso!' said the undertaker, taking Mr. Bumble by the gilt-edged lappel of his official coat; 'that's just the very thing I

wanted to speak to you about. You know—dear me, what a very elegant button this is, Mr. Bumble; I never noticed it before.'

"'Yes, I think it is rather pretty,' said the beadle, glancing proudly downward at the large brass buttons which embellished his coat. 'The die is the same as the parochial seal—the Good Samaritan healing the sick and bruised man. The board presented it to me on New-year's morning, Mr. Sowerberry. I put it on, I remember, for the first time to attend the inquest on that reduced tradesman who died in a doorway at midnight.'

"'I recollect,' said the undertaker. 'The jury brought in—Died from exposure to the cold, and want of the common necessaries of life—didn't they?'

"Mr. Bumble nodded.

"'And they made it a special verdict, I think,' said the undertaker, 'by adding some words to the effect, that if the relieving officer had'——

"'Tush—foolery!' interposed the beadle, angrily. 'If the board attended to all the nonsense that ignorant jurymen talk, they'd have enough to do.'

"'Very true,' said the undertaker; 'they would indeed.'

"'Juries,' said Mr. Bumble, grasping his cane tightly, as was his wont when working into a passion—'juries is ineddicated, vulgar, grovelling wretches.'

"'So they are,' said the undertaker.

"'They haven't no more philosophy or political economy about 'em than that,' said the beadle, snapping his fingers contemptuously.

"'No more they have,' acquiesced the undertaker.

"'I despise 'em,' said the beadle, growing very red in the face.

"'So do I,' rejoined the undertaker.

"'And I only wish we'd a jury of the independent sort in the house for a week or two,' said the beadle; 'the rules and regulations of the board would soon bring their spirit down for them.'

"'Let 'em alone for that,' replied the undertaker. So saying, he smiled approvingly to calm the rising wrath of the indignant parish officer.

"Mr. Bumble lifted off his cocked-hat, took a handkerchief

from the inside of the crown, wiped from his forehead the perspiration which his rage had engendered, fixed the cocked hat on again, and, turning to the undertaker, said in a calmer voice, 'Well, what about the boy?'

"'Oh!' replied the undertaker; 'why, you know, Mr. Bumble, I pay a good deal toward the poor's rates.'

"'Hem!' said Mr. Bumble. 'Well?'

"'Well,' replied the undertaker, 'I was thinking that if I pay so much toward 'em, I've a right to get as much out of 'em as I can, Mr. Bumble; and so—and so—I think I'll take the boy myself.'

"Mr. Bumble grasped the undertaker by the arm and led him into the building. Mr. Sowerberry was closeted with the board for five minutes, and then it was arranged that Oliver should go to him that evening 'upon liking'—a phrase which means, in the case of a parish apprentice, that if the master find, upon a short trial, that he can get enough work out of a boy without putting too much food in him, he shall have him for a term of years to do what he likes with.

"When little Oliver was taken before 'the gentlemen' that evening, and informed that he was to go that night as general house-lad to a coffin-maker's, and that if he complained of his situation, or ever came back to the parish again, he would be sent to sea, there to be drowned or knocked on the head, as the case might be, he evinced so little emotion, that they by common consent pronounced him a hardened young rascal, and ordered Mr. Bumble to remove him forthwith."

Some years ago an investigation into the treatment of the poor in St. Pancras workhouse was made. It originated in the suicide of a girl, who, having left her place, drowned herself rather than return to the workhouse to be confined in the "shed"—a place of confinement for refractory and ill-disposed paupers. The unanimous verdict of the coroner's jury was to this effect,

and had appended to it an opinion that the discipline of the shed was unnecessarily severe. This verdict led to an investigation.

Mr. Howarth, senior churchwarden, a guardian, and a barrister, explained that the shed was used for separating able-bodied, idle, and dissolute paupers from the aged and respectable inmates of the house. The shed was not, he declared, a place of confinement any more than the workhouse itself. The place in question consists of two rooms, a day-room and a dormitory, on the basement of the main building, two feet below the level of the soil, each about thirty-five feet long by fifteen wide and seven high. The bedroom contains ten beds, occupied sometimes by sixteen, sometimes by twenty or twenty-four paupers. According to the hospital calculation of a cube of nine feet to an occupant, the dormitory should accommodate six persons. The damp from an adjoining cesspool oozes through the walls. This pleasant apartment communicates with a yard forty feet long, and from fifteen to twenty broad, with a flagged pavement and high walls. This yard is kept always locked. But it is not a place of confinement. Oh no! it is a place of separation.

Let us see the evidence of James Hill, who waits on the occupants of the shed:—"They are locked up night and day. They frequently escape over the walls. They are put in for misconduct."

Mr. Lee, the master of the workhouse, declares that

if the persons in the shed make application to come out, they are frequently released. He is "not aware if he has any legal right to refuse them, but does sometimes exercise that authority." One of the women is there for throwing her clothes over the wall; another for getting "overtaken in liquor" while out of the house, and losing her pail and brush. A third inmate is a girl of weak intellect, who went out for a day, was made drunk and insensible by a male pauper, and suffered dreadful maltreatment.

All the pauper witnesses represent the shed as a place of punishment. The six ounces of meat given three times a week by the dietary, is reduced to four ounces for the shed paupers. Still all this, in Mr. Howarth's eyes, neither constitutes the shed a place of confinement nor of punishment. It is a place of separation. So is a prison. It is a prison in a prison; a lower depth in the lowest deep of workhouse wretchedness and restraint.

Are we to be told that this is "classification," (as the report of the directors impudently calls it,) by which the young and old, imbecile and drunken, sickly and turbulent, are shut up together day and night picking oakum; looking out through the heavy day on the bare walls of their wretched yard—at night breathing their own fœtid exhalations and the miasma of a cesspool, twenty-four of them sometimes in a space only fit to accommodate six with due regard to health and decency? And all this at the arbitrary will of master or matron,

unchecked by the board! One poor creature had been there for three years. She had not come out because "she was in such bad health, and had nowhere to go." Yet she was shut up, because she was considered able bodied and fit for work, when her appearance belied it, and spoke her broken spirit and shattered constitution.

Mr. W. Lee, guardian, seemed blessed with an unusual amount of ignorance as to his legal powers and responsibilities. He kept no account of persons confined in the black-hole, for forty-eight hours sometimes, and without directions from the board. He thought the matron had power to put paupers in the strong room. On one point he was certain: he "had no doubt that persons have been confined without his orders." He "had no doubt that he had received instructions from the board about the refractory ward, but he does not know where to find them." "If any paupers committed to the ward feel aggrieved, they can apply to be released, and he had no doubt he would release them." He made no weekly report of punishments. He reigned supreme, monarch of all he surveyed, wielding the terrors of shed and black-hole unquestioned and unchecked.

In Miss Stone, the matron, he had a worthy coadjutrix. The lady felt herself very much "degraded" by the coroner's jury. They asked her some most inconvenient questions, to which she gave awkwardly ready answers. She confined to the shed a girl who returned from place, though she admitted the work of the place

was too much for her. She confessed she might have punished Jones (the suicide) by putting her in the black-hole; but it was a mere trifle—"only a few hours" in an underground cell, "perhaps from morning till night, for refusing to do some domestic service." Jones was helpless; her mistress brought her back to the workhouse. Jones cried, and begged to be taken back to service, offering to work for nothing. Her recollections of the workhouse do not seem to have been pleasant. Hard work, unpaid; suicide; any thing rather than the shed.

A precious testimony to the St. Pancras system of "classification!" These paupers in the shed are clearly a refractory set. "They complain of being shut up so long." "They say they would like more bread and more meat." Audacious as Oliver Twist! They even complain of the damp and bad smell. Ungrateful, dainty wretches! On the whole, as Mr. Howarth says, it is evidently "unjust to suppose that the system of separation adopted in the house is regarded as a mode of punishment." The directors issued a solemn summons to the members of the parochial medical board. District surgeons and consulting surgeons assembled, inspected the shed, and pronounced it a very pleasant place if the roof were higher, and if the ventilation were better, and if the damp were removed, and if fewer slept in a bed, and six instead of twenty-four in the room. They then examined the dietary, and pronounced it sufficient if

the allowances were of full weight, if the meat were of the best quality, if there were plenty of milk in the porridge, and if the broth were better. Great virtue in an "if!" Unhappily, in the present case, the allowances were not full weight; the meat not of the best quality; there is not milk enough in the porridge; and the broth might be very much better, and yet not good.

Mr. Cooper, the parish surgeon, was a special object of antipathy to the worthy and humane Howarth; he was one of those ridiculously particular men, unfit to deal with paupers. He actually objected to the pauper women performing their ablutions in the urinals, and felt aggrieved when the master told him to "mind his shop," and Howarth stood by without rebuking the autocrat! Mr. Cooper, too, admits that the dietary would be sufficient with all the above-mentioned "ifs." But he finds that the milk porridge contains one quart of milk to six of oatmeal; that the meat is half fat, and often uneatable from imperfect cooking; and that the frequent stoppages of diet are destructive of the health of the younger inmates. His remonstrances, however, have been received in a style that has read him a lesson, and he ceases to remonstrate accordingly, and the guardians have it as they would—a silent surgeon and an omnipotent master.

The saddest part of the farce, however, was that of the last day's proceedings. The quality and quantity of the diet had been discussed; the directors felt bound

to examine into both; so they proceeded to the house. Of course the master knew nothing of the intended visit. Who can suspect the possibility of such a thing after the previous display of Howarth's impartiality and determination to do justice? So to the house they went. They took the excellent Lee quite by surprise, and enjoyed parish pot-luck. Dr. Birmingham's description makes one's mouth water:—

"He came to the house on Saturday, in order to examine the food; he found that, on that day, the inmates had what was called ox-cheek soup; he tasted it, and he was so well satisfied with it that he took all that was given to him. He then went into the kitchen, and saw the master cutting up meat for the sick and infirm. He tasted the mutton, and found it as succulent and as good as that which he purchased for his own consumption."

The picture of this patriarchal and benevolent master "cutting up meat for the sick and infirm," is perfectly beautiful. Howarth, too, did his duty, and was equally lucky.

"Mr. Howarth stated that he had visited the house yesterday, and had examined the food, with the quality of which he was perfectly satisfied. He tasted the soup, and was so well pleased with it that he obtained an allowance. (A laugh.)"

But not satisfied with this, that Rhadamanthus of a Birmingham proposed a crucial test.

"He begged to move that the master of the workhouse be desired to bring before the board the ordinary rations allowed the paupers for breakfast, dinner, and supper; and that any gentleman present be allowed to call and examine any of the paupers

as to whether the food they usually received was of the same quality, and in the same quantity."

The rations were produced; "and, lo! the porridge smoked upon the board." Thus it was, in tempting and succulent array—the pauper bill of fare:—

Soup.
Cheese. Pease porridge. Potatoes.
Meat. Beer.

Nothing can be more tempting; who would not be a pauper of St. Pancras? Six paupers are called in, and one and all testify that the rations of meat, potatoes, soup, and porridge are better in quality and greater in quantity than the workhouse allowance. There is a slight pause. Birmingham looks blank at Howarth, and Howarth gazes uneasily on Birmingham; but it is only for a minute: ready wits jump:—

"*Dr. Birmingham.* This is the allowance for Sunday.

"*Mr. Marley.* I understand there is no difference between the allowance on Sunday and on any other day.

"*Mr. Howarth.* They have better meat on Sundays."

What follows this glaring exposure? Impeachment of the master, on this clear proof of malversation in the house and dishonesty before the board? So expects Mr. Halton, and very naturally suggests that Mr. Lee be called on for an explanation. Mr. Lee is not called on, and no explanation takes place. The room is cleared, and, after an hour and a half's discussion, a report is unanimously agreed to. Our readers may anticipate its

tenour. It finds that there is no place deserving to be called the shed; that the rooms so called are very admirable places of "separation" for refractory paupers; that the diet is excellent; that every thing is as it ought to be. It recommends that reports of punishments be more regularly made to the board, that classification of old and young be improved, and that some little change be made in the ventilation of the refractory wards!

And so concludes this sad farce of the St. Pancras investigation. One more disgraceful to the guardians cannot be found even in the pregnant annals of workhouse mismanagement.*

"Farming out" paupers, especially children, is one of the most prolific sources of misery among the English poor who are compelled to appeal to the parish authorities. This practice consists of entering into contracts with individuals to supply the paupers with food, clothing, and lodging. The man who offers to perform the work for the smallest sum commonly gets the contract, and then the poor wretches who look to him for the necessaries of life must submit to all kinds of treatment, and be stinted in every thing. During the last visit of that scourge, the cholera, to England, a large number of farmed pauper children were crowded, by one Mr. Drouet, a contractor, into a close and filthy building, where they nearly all perished.

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* London Daily News.

An investigation was subsequently held, but influential persons screened the authors of this tragedy from justice. During the investigation, it was clearly shown that the children confided to the care of Mr. Drouet were kept in a state of filth and semi-starvation.

So much for the boasted charity of the dominant class in Great Britain! By its enormous drain upon the public purse, and its vast monopoly of that soil which was given for the use of all, it creates millions of paupers—wretches without homes, without resources, and almost without hope; and then, to prevent themselves from being hurled from their high and luxurious places, and from being devoured as by ravenous wolves, they take the miserable paupers in hand, separate families, shut them up, as in the worst of prisons, and give them something to keep life in their bodies. Then the lords and ladies ask the world to admire their charitable efforts. What they call charity is the offspring of fear!

A member of the humbler classes in England no sooner begins to exist, than the probability of his becoming a pauper is contemplated by the laws. A writer in Chambers's Journal says, in regard to this point—

"Chargeability is the English slave system. The poor man cannot go where he lists in search of employment—he may become chargeable. He cannot take a good place which may be offered to him, for he cannot get a residence, lest he become chargeable. Houses are pulled down over the ears of honest working-men, and decent poor people are driven from Dan to

Beersheba, lest they become chargeable. There is something infinitely distressing in the whole basis of this idea—that an English peasant must needs be regarded from his first breath, and all through life, as a possible pauper. But the positive hardships arising from the idea are what we have at present to deal with.

"These are delineated in a happy collection of facts lately brought forward by Mr. Chadwick at a meeting of the Farmers' Club in London. It appears that the company assembled, who, from their circumstances, were all qualified to judge of the truth of the facts and the soundness of the conclusions, gave a general assent to what was said by the learned poor-law secretary. Unfortunately, we can only give a few passages from this very remarkable speech.

"Mr. Chadwick first referred to the operation of the existing law upon *unsettled* labouring men. 'The lower districts of Reading were severely visited with fever during the last year, which called attention to the sanitary condition of the labouring population. I was requested to visit it. While making inquiries upon the subject, I learned that some of the worst-conditioned places were occupied by agricultural labourers. Many of them, it appeared, walked four, six, seven, and even eight miles, in wet and snow, to and from their places of work, after twelve hours' work on the farm. Why, however, were agricultural labourers in these fever-nests of a town? I was informed, in answer, that they were driven in there by the pulling down of cottages, to avoid parochial settlements and contributions to their maintenance in the event of destitution. Among a group, taken as an example there, in a wretched place consisting of three rooms, ten feet long, lived Stephen Turner, a wife, and three children, He walked to and from his place of work about seven miles daily, expending two hours and a half in walking before he got to his productive work on the farm. His wages are 10*s.* a week, out of which he pays 2*s.* for his wretched tenement. If he were resident on the farm, the two and a half hours of daily labour spent in walking might be expended in productive work; his labour would be worth, according to his own account, and I believe to a farmer's acknowledgment, 2*s.* 6*d.* per week more. For a rent of

£5 5*s.*, such as he now pays, he would be entitled to a good cottage with a garden; and his wife and children being near, would be available for the farm labour. So far as I could learn there are between one hundred and two hundred agricultural labourers living in the borough of Reading, and the numbers are increasing. The last week brought to my notice a fact illustrative of the present unjust state of things, so far as regards the labourer. A man belonging to Maple-Durham lived in Reading; walked about four miles a day to his work, the same back, frequently getting wet; took fever, and continued ill some time, assisted by the Reading Union in his illness; recovered, and could have returned to his former employment of 10*s.* per week, but found he was incapable of walking the distance; the consequence was, he took work that only enabled him to earn 5*s.* per week; he is now again unable to work. Even in Lincolnshire, where the agriculture is of a high order, and the wages of the labourer consequently not of the lowest, similar displacements have been made, to the prejudice of the farmer as well as the labourer, and, as will be seen, of the owner himself. Near Gainsborough, Lincoln, and Louth, the labourers walk even longer distances than near Reading. I am informed of instances where they walk as far as six miles; that is, twelve miles daily, or seventy-two miles weekly, to and from their places of work. Let us consider the bare economy, the mere waste of labour, and what a state of agricultural management is indicated by the fact that such a waste can have taken place. Fifteen miles a day is the regular march of infantry soldiers, with two rest-days—one on Monday, and one on Thursday; twenty-four miles is a forced march. The man who expends eight miles per diem, or forty-eight miles per week, expends to the value of at least two days' hard labour per week, or one hundred in the year, uselessly, that might be expended usefully and remuneratively in production. How different is it in manufactories, and in some of the mines, or at least in the best-managed and most successful of them! In some mines as much as £2000 and £3000 is paid for new machinery to benefit the labourers, and save them the labour of ascending and descending by ladders. In many manufactories they have hoists to

raise them and their loads from lower to upper rooms, to save them the labour of toiling up stairs, to economize their strength for piece-work to mutual advantage. It is not in county and borough towns only that this unwholesome over-crowding is going on. I am informed that from the like cause the evil of over-crowding is going on in the ill-conditioned villages of open parishes. It is admitted, and made manifest in extensive evidence given before a committee of the house of lords by practical farmers, that when an agricultural labourer applies for work, the first question put to him is, not what has been his experience, what can he do, but to what parish does he belong. If he do not belong to the parish of the occupier, the reply is usually an expression of regret that he can only employ the labourer of his own parish. To the extent to which the farmer is directly liable to the payment of rates, by the displacement of a settled parish labourer, he is liable to a penalty for the employment of any other labourer who is not of the parish. To the same extent is he liable to a penalty if he do not employ a parish labourer who is worthless, though a superior labourer may be got by going farther a-field, to whom he would give better wages. This labourer who would go farther is thus driven back upon his parish; that is to say, imposed, and at the same time made dependent, upon the two or three or several farmers, by whom the parish is occupied. He then says, 'If this or that farmer will not employ me, one of them must; if none of them will, the parish must keep me, and the parish pay is as good as any.' Labour well or ill, he will commonly get little more, and it is a matter of indifference to him: it is found to be, in all its essential conditions, labour without hope—slave labour; and he is rendered unworthy of his hire. On the other hand, in what condition does the law place the employer? It imposes upon him the whole mass of labourers of a narrow district, of whatsoever sort, without reference to his wants or his capital. He says, 'I do not want the men at this time, or these men are not suitable to me; they will not do the work I want; but if I must have them, or pay for keeping them in idleness if I do not employ them, why, then, I can only give them such wages as their labour is worth to me, and that is little.' Hence wages

are inevitably reduced. What must be the effect upon the manufacturer if he were placed in the same position as tenant farmers are in the smaller parishes in the southern counties, if he were restricted to the employment only of the labourers in the parish?—if, before he engaged a smith, a carpenter, or a mason, he were compelled to inquire, 'To what parish do you belong?' Why, that the 24*s.* a week labour would fall to 12*s.* or 10*s.*, or the price of agricultural labour. Agriculturists from northern districts, who work their farms with 12*s.* and 15*s.* a week free labour, have declined the temptation of low rents, to take farms in parishes where the wages are 7*s.* or 8*s.* a week. While inspecting a farm in one of these pauperized districts, an able agriculturist could not help noticing the slow, drawling motions of one of the labourers there, and said, 'My man, you do not sweat at that work.' 'Why, no, master,' was the reply; 'seven shillings a week isn't sweating wages.' The evidence I have cited indicates the circumstances which prevent the adoption of piece-work, and which, moreover, restrict the introduction of machinery into agricultural operations, which, strange though it may appear to many, is greatly to the injury of the working classes; for wherever agricultural labour is free, and machinery has been introduced, there more and higher-paid labour is required, and labourers are enabled to go on and earn good wages by work with machines long after their strength has failed them for working by hand. In free districts, and with high cultivation by free and skilled labour, I can adduce instances of skilled agricultural labourers paid as highly as artisans. I could adduce an instance, bordering upon Essex, where the owner, working it with common parish labour at 1*s.* 6*d.*, a day, could not make it pay; and an able farmer now works it with free labour, at 2*s.* 6*d.*, 3*s.*, and 3*s.* 6*d.*, and even more, per day, for taskwork, and, there is reason to believe, makes it pay well. A farmer, who died not long ago immensely wealthy, was wont to say that 'he could not live upon poor 2*s.* a day labour; he could not make his money upon less than half-crowners.' The freedom of labour, not only in the northern counties, but in some places near the slave-labour districts of the southern counties, is already attend-

ed with higher wages—at the rate of 12*s.*, 14*s.*, and 15*s.* weekly. In such counties as Berks and Bedford, the freedom of the labour market, when it came into full operation, could not raise wages less than 2*s.* a week; and 2*s.* a week would, in those counties, represent a sum of productive expenditure and increased produce equal to the whole amount of unproductive expenditure on the poor-rates.'"

By this arrangement of parochial settlement, the English agricultural labourer has a compulsory residence, like that of the American slave upon the plantation where he is born. This, therefore, is one of the most striking manifestations of the peasant being a serf. A free and beautiful system is that of the English Unions!

KIDNAPPING OF WILLIE MORRISON.

## CHAPTER VI.

### IMPRESSMENT, OR KIDNAPPING WHITE MEN FOR SLAVES IN THE NAVAL SERVICE.

ONE of the most repulsive features of the general system of slavery in Great Britain, is called impressment. It is the forcible removal of seamen from their ordinary employment, and compelling them to serve, against their will, in the ships of war. Long ago, some of the maritime nations condemned men to the galleys for crime. But Great Britain dooms peaceable and unoffending men to her vessels of war, severs all the ties of home and kindred, and outrages every principle of justice, in this practice of impressment. The husband is torn from his wife, the father from his children, the brother from the sister, by the press-gangs—the slave-hunters of Britain.

This practice is not expressly sanctioned by any act of Parliament, but it is so, indirectly, by the numerous statutes that have been passed granting exemptions from it. According to Lord Mansfield, it is "a power founded upon immemorial usage," and is understood to make a part of the common law. All *seafaring* men

are liable to impressment, unless specially protected by custom or statute. Seamen executing particular services for government, not unfrequently get protections from the Admiralty, Navy Board, &c. Some are exempted by local custom; and *ferrymen* are everywhere privileged from impressment. The statutory exemptions are as follows:—

I. *Every ship in the coal-trade* has the following persons protected, viz. two able seamen (such as the master shall nominate) for every ship of one hundred tons, and one for every fifty tons for every ship of one hundred tons and upward; and every officer who presumes to impress any of the above, shall forfeit, to the master or owner of such vessel, £10 for every man so impressed; and such officers shall be incapable of holding any place, office, or employment in any of his majesty's ships of war.—6 and 7 Will. 3, c. 18, § 19.*

II. *No parish apprentice* shall be compelled or permitted to enter into his majesty's sea-service, until he arrives at the age of eighteen years.—2 and 3 Anne, c. 6, § 4.

III. Persons voluntarily binding themselves apprentices to sea-service, shall not be impressed for three years from the date of their indentures. [This is a protection for the master—not for the parish apprentice.] But no persons above eighteen years of age shall have any exemption or protection from his majesty's service, if they have been at sea before they became apprentices. —2 and 3 Anne, c. 6, § 15; 4 Anne, c. 19, § 17; and 13 Geo. 2, c. 17, § 2.

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* In order that these men shall be thus protected, it is necessary for the master TO NAME THEM, before they are impressed; this is to be done by going before the mayor or other chief magistrate of the place, who is to give the master a certificate, in which is contained the names of the particular men whom he thus nominates; and this certificate will be their protection.

IV. *Apprentices.*—The act 4 Geo. 4, c. 25, enacts some new regulations with respect to the number of apprentices that ships must have on board, according to their tonnage, and grants protection to such apprentices till they have attained the age of twenty-one years.

V. *Persons employed in the fisheries.*—The act 50 Geo. 3, c. 108, grants the following exemptions from impressment, viz.:

1. *Masters of fishing vessels or boats*, who, either themselves or their owners, have, or within six months before applying for a protection shall have had, one apprentice or more, under sixteen years of age, bound for five years, and employed in the business of fishing.

2. All such apprentices, not exceeding *eight* to every master or owner of any fishing vessel of fifty tons or upward; not exceeding *seven* to every vessel or boat of thirty-five tons, and under fifty; not exceeding *six* to every vessel of thirty tons, or under thirty-five; and not exceeding *four* to every boat under thirty tons burden, during the time of their apprenticeship, and till the age of twenty years; they continuing, for the time, in the business of fishing only.

3. *One mariner*, besides the master and apprentices, to every fishing vessel of one hundred tons or upward, employed on the sea-coast, during his continuance in such service.

4. *Any landsman*, above the age of eighteen, entering and employed on board such vessel for two years from his first going to sea and to the end of the voyage then engaged in, if he so long continue in such service. [The ignorance of a landsman seems to be the only reason for this exemption.]

An affidavit sworn before a justice of the peace, containing the tonnage of such fishing vessel or boat, the port or place to which she belongs, the name and description of the master, the age of every apprentice, the term for which he is bound and the date of his indenture, and the name, age, and description of every such mariner and landsman respectively, and the time of such landsman's first going to sea, is to be transmitted to the Admiralty; who, upon finding the facts correctly stated, grant a separate protection to every individual. In case, however, "*of an actual in-*

*vasion of these kingdoms, or imminent danger thereof,"* such protected persons may be impressed; but except upon such an emergency, any officer or officers impressing such protected person, shall respectively forfeit £20 to the party impressed, if not an apprentice, or to his master if he be an apprentice.—§§ 2, 3, 4. [The phrase, "imminent danger of invasion," is susceptible of a wide interpretation for the purposes of tyranny.]

VI. *General exemptions.*—All persons fifty-five years of age and upward, and under eighteen years. Every person being a foreigner, who shall serve in any merchant ship, or other trading vessels or privateers, belonging to a subject of the crown of Great Britain; and all persons, of what age soever, who shall use the sea, shall be protected for two years, to be computed from the time of their first using it.—13 Geo. 2, c. 17. [The impressment of American seamen, before the war of 1812, shows how easily these exemptions may be disregarded.]

VII. *Harpooners*, line-managers, or boat-steerers, engaged in the Southern whale fishery, are also protected.—26 Geo. 3, c. 50.

VIII. *Mariners employed in the herring fisheries* are exempted while actually employed.—48 Geo. 3, c. 110.

"The practice of impressment," says McCulloch, "so subversive of every principle of justice, is vindicated on the alleged ground of its being absolutely necessary to the manning of the fleet. But this position, notwithstanding the confidence with which it has been taken up, is not quite so tenable as has been supposed. The difficulties experienced in procuring sailors for the fleet at the breaking out of a war are not natural, but artificial, and might be got rid of by a very simple arrangement. During peace, not more than a fourth or fifth part of the seamen are retained in his majesty's service that are commonly required during war; and, if peace continue for a few years, the total number of sailors in the king's and the merchant service is limited to that which is merely adequate to supply the reduced demand of the former and the ordinary demand of the latter. When, therefore, war is declared, and 30,000 or 40,000 additional seamen are wanted for the fleet, they cannot be obtained, unless by withdrawing them

from the merchant service, which has not more than its complement of hands. But to do this by offering the seamen higher wages would be next to impossible, and would, supposing it were practicable, impose such a sacrifice upon the public as could hardly be borne. And hence, it is said, the necessity of impressment, a practice which every one admits can be justified on no other ground than that of its being absolutely essential to the public safety. It is plain, however, that a necessity of this kind may be easily obviated. All, in fact, that is necessary for this purpose, is merely to keep such a number of sailors in his majesty's service during peace, as may suffice, with the ordinary proportion of landsmen and boys, to man the fleet at the breaking out of a war. Were this done, there would not be the shadow of a pretence for resorting to impressment; and the practice, with the cruelty and injustice inseparable from it, might be entirely abolished.

"But it is said that, though desirable in many respects, the *expense* of such a plan will always prevent its being adopted. It admits, however, of demonstration, that instead of being dearer, this plan would be actually cheaper than that which is now followed. Not more than 1,000,000*l.* or 1,200,000*l.* a year would be required to be added to the navy estimates, and that would not be a real, but merely a nominal advance. The violence and injustice to which the practice of impressment exposes sailors operates at all times to raise their wages, by creating a disinclination on the part of many young men to enter the sea-service; and this disinclination is vastly increased during war, when wages usually rise to four or five times their previous amount, imposing a burden on the commerce of the country, exclusive of other equally mischievous consequences, many times greater than the tax that would be required to keep up the peace establishment of the navy to its proper level. It is really, therefore, a vulgar error to suppose that impressment has the recommendation of cheapness in its favour; and, though it had, no reasonable man will contend that that is the only, or even the principal, circumstance to be attended to. In point of fact, however, it is as costly as it is oppressive and unjust."

These remarks are creditable to the good sense and humanity of McCulloch; but are too much devoted to the *expediency* of outrage. To speak more clearly, the discussion is conducted in too cool-blooded a style. We defy any man of ordinary sensibility to read the accounts of scenes attending many cases of impressment, without feeling the deepest pity for the enslaved seaman and his bereaved relatives and friends, and burning with indignation at the heartless tyranny displayed by the government. After a long and laborious voyage in a merchant vessel, the sun-burned seamen arrives in sight of home. His wife and children, who have long bewailed his absence and feared for his fate, stand, with joyous countenances, upon the shore, eager to embrace the returned wanderer. Perhaps a government vessel, on the search for seaman, then sends its barbarous press-gang aboard the merchantman, and forces the husband and father once more from the presence of the beloved ones. Or, he is permitted to land. He visits his home, and is just comfortably settled, resolved to pass the rest of his days with his family, when the gang tears him from their arms—and years—long, dragging years will pass away before he will be allowed to return. Then, the wife may be dead, the children at the mercy of the parish. This is English freedom! A gang of manacled negroes shocks humanity, and calls down the vengeance of heaven upon the head of the slave-driver; but a press-gang may perform its heart-

rending work in perfect consistency with the free and glorious institutions of Britain.

By far the most thrilling narrative of the scenes attending impressments, with which we are acquainted, is to be found in the romance of "Katie Stewart," published in Blackwood's Magazine, without the author's name. We quote:—

"The next day was the Sabbath, and Willie Morison, with his old mother leaning on his arm, reverently deposited his silver half-crown in the plate at the door of West Anster Church, an offering of thankfulness, for the parish poor. There had been various returns during the previous week; a brig from the Levant, and another from Riga—where, with its cargo of hemp, it had been frozen in all the winter—had brought home each their proportion of welcome family fathers, and young sailor men, like Willie Morison himself, to glad the eyes of friends and kindred. One of these was the son of that venerable elder in the lateran, who rose to read the little notes which the thanksgivers had handed to him at the door; and Katie Stewart's eyes filled as the old man's slow voice, somewhat moved by reading his son's name just before, intimated to the waiting congregation before him, and to the minister in the pulpit behind, also waiting to include all these in his concluding prayer, that William Morison gave thanks for his safe return.

"And then there came friendly greetings as the congregation streamed out through the church-yard, and the soft, hopeful sunshine of spring threw down a bright flickering network of light and shade through the soft foliage on the causewayed street;—peaceful people going to secure and quiet homes—families joyfully encircling the fathers or brothers for whose return they had just rendered thanks out of full hearts, and peace upon all and over all, as broad as the skies and as calm.

"But as the stream of people pours again in the afternoon from the two neighbour churches, what is this gradual excitement which

manifests itself among them? Hark! there is the boom of a gun plunging into all the echoes; and crowds of mothers and sisters cling about these young sailors, and almost struggle with them, to hurry them home. Who is that hastening to the pier, with his staff clenched in his hand, and his white 'haffit locks' streaming behind him? It is the reverend elder who to-day returned thanks for his restored son. The sight of him—the sound of that second-gun pealing from the Firth puts the climax on the excitement of the people, and now, in a continuous stream from the peaceful churchyard gates, they flow toward the pier and the sea.

"Eagerly running along by the edge of the rocks, at a pace which, on another Sabbath, she would have thought a desecration of the day, clinging to Willie Morison's arm, and with an anxious heart, feeling her presence a kind of protection to him, Katie Stewart hastens to the Billy Ness. The gray pier of Anster is lined with anxious faces, and here and there a levelled telescope under the care of some old shipmaster attracts round it a still deeper, still more eager knot of spectators. The tide is out, and venturous lads are stealing along the sharp low ranges of rock, slipping now and then with incautious steps into the little clear pools of sea-water which surround them; for their eyes are not on their own uncertain footing, but fixed, like the rest, on that visible danger up the Firth, in which all feel themselves concerned.

"Already there are spectators, and another telescope on the Billy Ness, and the whole range of 'the braes' between Anstruther and Pittenweem is dotted with anxious lookers-on; and the far away pier of Pittenweem, too, is dark with its little crowd.

"What is the cause! Not far from the shore, just where that headland, which hides you from the deep indentation of Largo Bay, juts out upon the Firth, lies a little vessel, looking like a diminutive Arabian horse, or one of the aristocratic young slight lads who are its officers, with high blood, training, and courage in every tight line of its cordage and taper stretch of its masts. Before it, arrested in its way, lies a helpless merchant brig, softly swaying on the bright mid-waters of the Firth, with the cutter's boat rapidly approaching its side.

"Another moment and it is boarded; a very short interval of

silence, and again the officer—you can distinguish him with that telescope, by his cocked hat, and the flash which the scabbard of his sword throws on the water as he descends the vessel's side—has re-entered the cutter's boat. Heavily the boat moves through the water now, crowded with pressed men—poor writhing hearts, whose hopes of home-coming and peace have been blighted in a moment; captured, some of them, in sight of their homes, and under the anxious, straining eyes of wives and children, happily too far off to discern their full calamity.

"A low moan comes from the lips of that poor woman, who, wringing her hands and rocking herself to and fro, with the unconscious movement of extreme pain, looks pitifully in Willie Morison's face, as he fixes the telescope on the scene. She is reading the changes of its expression, as if her sentence was there; but he says nothing, though the very motion of his hand, as he steadies the glass, attracts, like something of occult significance, the agonized gaze which dwells upon him.

"'Captain, captain!' she cried at last, softly pulling his coat, and with unconscious art using the new title: 'Captain, is't the Traveller? Can ye make her out? She has a white figure-head at her bows, and twa white lines round her side. Captain, captain! tell me for pity's sake!'

"Another long keen look was bent on the brig, as slowly and disconsolately she resumed her onward way.

"'No, Peggie,' said the young sailor, looking round to meet her eye, and to comfort his companion, who stood trembling by his side: 'No, Peggie—make yourself easy; it's no the Traveller.'

"The poor woman seated herself on the grass, and, supporting her head on her hands, wiped from her pale cheek tears of relief and thankfulness.

"'God be thanked! and oh! God pity thae puir creatures, and their wives, and their little anes. I think I have the hardest heart in a' the world, that can be glad when there's such misery in sight.'

"But dry your tears, poor Peggie Rodger—brace up your trembling heart again for another fiery trial; for here comes another white sail peacefully gliding up the Firth, with a flag

fluttering from the stern, and a white figure-head dashing aside the spray, which seems to embrace it joyfully, the sailors think, as out of the stormy seas it nears the welcome home. With a light step the captain walks the little quarter-deck—with light hearts the seamen lounge amidship, looking forth on the green hills of Fife. Dark grows the young sailor's face, as he watches the unsuspicious victim glide triumphantly up through the blue water into the undreaded snare; and a glance round, a slight contraction of those lines in his face which Katie Stewart, eagerly watching him, has never seen so strongly marked before, tells the poor wife on the grass enough to make her rise hysterically strong, and with her whole might gaze at the advancing ship; for, alas! one can doubt its identity no longer. The white lines on its side —the white figure-head among the joyous spray—and the Traveller dashes on, out of its icy prison in the northern harbour—out of its stormy ocean voyage—homeward bound!

"Homeward bound! There is one yonder turning longing looks to Anster's quiet harbour as the ship sails past; carefully putting up in the coloured foreign baskets those little wooden toys which amused his leisure during the long dark winter among the ice, and thinking with involuntary smiles how his little ones will leap for joy as he divides the store. Put them up, good seaman, gentle father!—the little ones will be men and women before you look on them again.

"For already the echoes are startled, and the women here on shore shiver and wring their hands as the cutter's gun rings out its mandate to the passenger; and looking up the Firth you see nothing but a floating globe of white smoke, slowly breaking into long streamers, and almost entirely concealing the fine outline of the little ship of war. The challenged brig at first is doubtful—the alarmed captain does not understand the summons; but again another flash, another report, another cloud of white smoke, and the Traveller is brought to.

"There are no tears on Peggie Rodger's haggard cheeks, but a convulsive shudder passes over her now and then, as, with intense strained eyes, she watches the cutter's boat as it crosses the Firth toward the arrested brig.

"'God! an' it were sunk like lead!' said a passionate voice beside her, trembling with the desperate restraint of impotent strength.

"'God help us!—God help us!—curse na them,' said the poor woman with an hysteric sob. 'Oh, captain, captain! gie *me* the glass; if they pit him in the boat *I'll* ken Davie—if naebody else would, I can—gie me the glass.'

"He gave her the glass, and himself gladly turned away, trembling with the same suppressed rage and indignation which had dictated the other spectator's curse.

"'If ane could but warn them wi' a word,' groaned Willie Morison, grinding his teeth—'if ane could but lift a finger! but to see them gang into the snare like innocents in the broad day—Katie, it's enough to pit a man mad!'

"But Katie's pitiful compassionate eyes were fixed on Peggie Rodger—on her white hollow cheeks, and on the convulsive steadiness with which she held the telescope in her hand.

"'It's a fair wind into the Firth—there's another brig due. Katie, I canna stand and see this mair!'

"He drew her hand through his arm, and unconsciously grasping it with a force which at another time would have made her cry with pain, led her a little way back toward the town. But the fascination of the scene was too great for him, painful as it was, and far away on the horizon glimmered another sail.

"'Willie!' exclaimed Katie Stewart, 'gar some of the Sillardyke men gang out wi' a boat—gar them row down by the coast, and then strike out in the Firth, and warn the men.'

"He grasped her hand again, not so violently. 'Bless you, lassie! and wha should do your bidding but myself? but take care of yourself, Katie Stewart. What care I for a' the brigs in the world if any thing ails you? Gang hame, or'——

"'I'll no stir a fit till you're safe back again. I'll never speak to you mair if ye say anither word. Be canny—be canny—but haste ye away.'

"Another moment, and Katie Stewart stands alone by Peggie Rodger's side, watching the eager face which seems to grow old and emaciated with this terrible vigil, as if these moments were

years; while the ground flies under the bounding feet of Willie Morison, and he answers the questions which are addressed to him, as to his errand, only while he himself continues at full speed to push eastward to Cellardyke.

"And the indistinct words which he calls back to his comrades, as he 'devours the way,' are enough to send racing after him an eager train of coadjutors; and with his bonnet off, and his hands, which tremble as with palsy, clasped convulsively together, the white-haired elder leans upon the wall of the pier, and bids God bless them, God speed them, with a broken voice, whose utterance comes in gasps and sobs; for he has yet another son upon the sea.

"Meanwhile the cutter's boat has returned from the Traveller with its second load; and a kind bystander relieves the aching arms of poor Peggie Rodger of the telescope, in which now she has no further interest.

"'Gude kens, Gude kens,' said the poor woman slowly, as Katie strove to comfort her. 'I didna see him in the boat; but ane could see nothing but the wet oars flashing out of the water, and blinding folks e'en. What am I to do? Miss Katie, what am I to think? They maun have left some men in the ship to work her. Oh! God grant they have ta'en the young men, and no heads of families wi' bairns to toil for. But Davie's a buirdly man, just like ane to take an officer's ee. Oh, the Lord help us! for I'm just distraught, and kenna what to do.'

"A faint cheer, instantly suppressed, rises from the point of the pier and the shelving coast beyond; and yonder now it glides along the shore, with wet oars gleaming out of the dazzling sunny water, the boat of the forlorn hope. A small, picked, chosen company bend to the oars, and Willie Morison is at the helm, warily guiding the little vessel over the rocks, as they shelter themselves in the shadow of the coast. On the horizon the coming sail flutters nearer, nearer—and up the Firth yonder there is a stir in the cutter as she prepares to leave her anchor and strike into the mid-waters of the broad highway which she molests.

"The sun is sinking lower in the grand western skies, and beginning to cast long, cool, dewy shadows of every headland and little promontory over the whole rocky coast; but still the Firth is

burning with his slanting fervid rays, and Inchkeith far away lies like a cloud upon the sea, and the May, near at hand, lifts its white front to the sun—a Sabbath night as calm and full of rest as ever natural Sabbath was—and the reverend elder yonder on the pier uncovers his white head once more, and groans within himself, amid his passionate prayers for these perilled men upon the sea, over the desecrated Sabbath-day.

"Nearer and nearer wears the sail, fluttering like the snowy breast of some sea-bird in prophetic terror; and now far off the red fishing-boat strikes boldly forth into the Firth with a signal-flag at its prow.

"In the cutter they perceive it now; and see how the anchor swings up her shapely side, and the snowy sail curls over the yards, as with a bound she darts forth from her lurking-place, and flashing in the sunshine, like an eager hound leaps forth after her prey.

"The boat—the boat! With every gleam of its oars the hearts throb that watch it on its way; with every bound it makes there are prayers—prayers of the anguish which will take no discouragement—pressing in at the gates of heaven; and the ebbing tide bears it out, and the wind droops its wings, and falls becalmed upon the coast, as if repenting it of the evil service it did to those two hapless vessels which have fallen into the snare. Bravely on as the sun grows lower—bravely out as the fluttering stranger sail draws nearer and more near—and but one other strain will bring them within hail.

"But as all eyes follow these adventurers, another flash from the cutter's side glares over the shining water; and as the smoke rolls over the pursuing vessel, and the loud report again disturbs all the hills, Katie's heart grows sick, and she scarcely dares look to the east. But the ball has ploughed the water harmlessly, and yonder is the boat of rescue—yonder is the ship within hail; and some one stands up in the prow of the forlorn hope, and shouts and waves his hand.

"It is enough. 'There she goes—there she tacks!' cries exulting the man with the telescope, 'and in half an hour she'll be safe in St. Andrew's Bay.'

"But she sails slowly back—and slowly sails the impatient cutter, with little wind to swell her sails, and that little in her face; while the fisherboat, again falling close inshore with a relay of fresh men at the oars, has the advantage of them both.

"And now there is a hot pursuit—the cutter's boat in full chase after the forlorn hope; but as the sun disappears, and the long shadows lengthen and creep along the creeks and bays of the rocky coast so well known to the pursued, so ill to the pursuer, the event of the race is soon decided; and clambering up the first accessible landing-place they can gain, and leaving their boat on the rocks behind them, the forlorn hope joyously make their way home.

"'And it's a' Katie's notion and no a morsel of mine,' says the proud Willie Morison. But alas for your stout heart, Willie!—alas for the tremulous, startled bird which beats against the innocent breast of little Katie Stewart, for no one knows what heavy shadows shall vail the ending of this Sabbath-day.

* * * * *

"The mild spring night has darkened, but it is still early, and the moon is not yet up. The worship is over in John Stewart's decent house, and all is still within, though the miller and his wife still sit by the 'gathered' fire, and talk in half whispers about the events of the day, and the prospects of 'the bairns.' It is scarcely nine yet, but it is the reverent usage of the family to shut out the world earlier than usual on the Sabbath; and Katie, in consideration of her fatigue, has been dismissed to her little chamber in the roof. She has gone away not unwillingly, for, just before, the miller had closed the door on the slow, reluctant, departing steps of Willie Morison, and Katie is fain to be alone.

"Very small is this chamber in the roof of the Milton, which Janet and Katie used to share. She has set down her candle on the little table before that small glass in the dark carved frame, and herself stands by the window, which she has opened, looking out. The rush of the burn fills the soft air with sound, into which sometimes penetrates a far-off voice, which proclaims the little town still awake and stirring: but save the light from Robert Moulter's uncurtained window—revealing a dark gleaming link

of the burn, before the cot-house door—and the reddened sky yonder, reflecting that fierce torch on the May, there is nothing visible but the dark line of fields, and a few faint stars in the clouded sky.

"But the houses in Anster are not yet closed or silent. In the street which leads past the town-house and church of West Anster to the shore, you can see a ruddy light streaming out from the window upon the causeway, the dark churchyard wall, and overhanging trees. At the fire stands a comely young woman, lifting 'a kettle of potatoes' from the crook. The 'kettle' is a capacious pot on three feet, formed not like the ordinary 'kail-pat,' but like a little tub of iron; and now, as it is set down before the ruddy fire, you see it is full of laughing potatoes, disclosing themselves, snow-white and mealy, through the cracks in their clear dark coats. The mother of the household sits by the fireside, with a volume of sermons in her hand; but she is paying but little attention to the book, for the kitchen is full of young sailors, eagerly discussing the events of the day, and through the hospitable open door others are entering and departing with friendly salutations. Another such animated company fills the house of the widow Morison, 'aest the town,' for still the afternoon's excitement has not subsided.

"But up this dark leaf-shadowed street, in which we stand, there comes a muffled tramp as of stealthy footsteps. They hear nothing of it in that bright warm kitchen—fear nothing, as they gather round the fire, and sometimes rise so loud in their conversation that the house-mother lifts her hand, and shakes her head, with an admonitory, 'Whist bairns; mind, it's the Sabbath-day.'

"Behind backs, leaning against the sparkling panes of the window, young Robert Davidson speaks aside to Lizzie Tosh, the daughter of the house. They were 'cried' to-day in West Anster kirk, and soon will have a blithe bridal—'If naething comes in the way,' says Lizzie, with her downcast face; and the manly young sailor answers—'Nae fear.'

"'Nae fear!' But without, the stealthy steps come nearer; and if you draw far enough away from the open door to lose the merry voices, and have your eyes no longer dazzled with the light,

you will see dim figures creeping through the darkness, and feel that the air is heavy with the breath of men. But few people care to use that dark road between the manse and the churchyard at night, so no one challenges the advancing party, or gives the alarm.

"Lizzie Tosh has stolen to the door; it is to see if the moon is up, and if Robert will have light on his homeward walk to Pittenweem; but immediately she rushes in again, with a face as pale as it had before been blooming, and alarms the assembly. 'A band of the cutter's men;—an officer, with a sword at his side. Rin, lads, rin, afore they reach the door.'

"But there is a keen, eager face, with a cocked hat surmounting it, already looking in at the window. The assembled sailors make a wild plunge at the door; and, while a few escape under cover of the darkness, the cutter's men have secured, after a desperate resistance, three or four of the foremost. Poor fellows! You see them stand without, young Robert Davidson in the front, his broad, bronzed forehead bleeding from a cut he has received in the scuffle, and one of his captors, still more visibly wounded, looking on him with evil, revengeful eyes: his own eye, poor lad, is flaming with fierce indignation and rage, and his broad breast heaves almost convulsively. But now he catches a glimpse of the weeping Lizzie, and fiery tears, which scorch his eyelids, blind him for a moment, and his heart swells as if it would burst. But it does not burst, poor desperate heart! until the appointed bullet shall come, a year or two hence, to make its pulses quiet for ever.

"A few of the gang entered the house. It is only 'a but and a ben;' and Lizzie stands with her back against the door of the inner apartment, while her streaming eyes now and then cast a sick, yearning glance toward the prisoners at the door—for her brother stands there as well as her betrothed.

"'What for would you seek in there?' asked the mother, lifting up her trembling hands. 'What would ye despoil my chaumer for, after ye've made my hearthstane desolate. If ye've a license to steal men, ye've nane to steal gear. Ye've dune your warst: gang out o' my house ye thieves, ye locusts, ye'——

"'We'll see about that, old lady,' said the leader:—'put the girl away from that door. Tom, bring the lantern.'

"The little humble room was neatly arranged. It was their best, and they had not spared upon it what ornament they could attain. Shells far travelled, precious for the giver's sake, and many other heterogeneous trifles, such as sailors pick up in foreign parts, were arranged upon the little mantel-piece and grate. There was no nook or corner in it which could possibly be used for a hiding-place; but the experienced eye of the foremost man saw the homely counterpane disordered on the bed; and there indeed the mother had hid her youngest, dearest son. She had scarcely a minute's time to drag him in, to prevail upon him to let her conceal him under her feather-bed, and all its comfortable coverings. But the mother's pains were unavailing, and now she stood by, and looked on with a suppressed scream, while that heavy blow struck down her boy as he struggled—her youngest, fair-haired, hopeful boy.

"Calm thoughts are in your heart, Katie Stewart—dreams of sailing over silver seas under that moon which begins to rise, slowly climbing through the clouds yonder, on the south side of the Firth. In fancy, already, you watch the soft Mediterranean waves rippling past the side of the Flower of Fife, and see the strange beautiful countries of which your bridegroom has told you shining under the brilliant southern sun. And then the home-coming—the curious toys you will gather yonder for the sisters and the mother; the pride you will have in telling them how Willie has cared for your voyage—how wisely he rules the one Flower of Fife, how tenderly he guards the other.

"Your heart is touched, Katie Stewart, touched with the calm and pathos of great joy; and tears lie under your eyelashes, like the dew on flowers. Clasp your white hands on the sill of the window—heed not that your knees are unbended—and say your child's prayers with lips which move but utter nothing audible, and with your head bowed on the moonbeam, which steals into your window like a bird. True, you have said these child's prayers many a night, as in some sort a charm, to guard you as you slept; but now there comes upon your spirit an awe of the

great Father yonder, a dim and wonderful apprehension of the mysterious Son in whose name you make those prayers. Is it true, then, that he thinks of all our loves and sorrows, this One, whose visible form realizes to us the dim, grand, glorious heaven —knows us by name—remembers us with the God's love in his wonderful human heart;—*us*, scattered by myriads over his earth, like the motes in the sunbeam? And the tears steal over your cheeks, as you end the child's prayer with the name that is above all names.

"Now, will you rest? But the moon has mastered all her hilly way of clouds, and from the full sky looks down on you, Katie, with eyes of pensive blessedness like your own. Tarry a little—linger to watch that one bright spot on the Firth, where you could almost count the silvered waves as they lie beneath the light.

"But a rude sounds breaks upon the stillness—a sound of flying feet echoing over the quiet road; and now they become visible—one figure in advance, and a band of pursuers behind—the same brave heart which spent its strength to-day to warn the unconscious ship—the same strong form which Katie has seen in her dreams on the quarter-deck of the Flower of Fife;—but he will never reach that quarter-deck, Katie Stewart, for his strength flags, and they gain upon him.

"Gain upon him, step by step, unpitying bloodhounds!—see him lift up his hands to you, at your window, and have no ruth for his young hope, or yours;—and now their hands are on his shoulder, and he is in their power.

"'Katie!' cries the hoarse voice of Willie Morison, breaking the strange fascination in which she stood, 'come down and speak to me ae word, if ye wouldna break my heart. Man—if ye are a man—let me bide a minute; let me say a word to her. I'll maybe never see her in this world again.'

"The miller stood at the open door—the mother within was wiping the tears from her cheeks. 'Oh Katie, bairn, that ye had been sleeping!' But Katie rushed past them, and crossed the burn.

"What can they say?—only convulsively grasp each other's hands—wofully look into each other's faces, ghastly in the moon-

light; till Willie—Willie, who could have carried her like a child, in his strength of manhood—bowed down his head into those little hands of hers which are lost in his own vehement grasp, and hides with them his passionate tears.

"'Willie, I'll never forget ye,' says aloud the instinctive impulse of little Katie's heart, forgetting for the moment that there is any grief in the world but to see his. 'Night and day I'll mind ye, think of ye. If ye were twenty years away, I would be blither to wait for ye, than to be a queen. Willie, if ye must go, go with a stout heart—for I'll never forget ye, if it should be twenty years!'

"Twenty years! Only eighteen have you been in the world yet, brave little Katie Stewart; and you know not the years, how they drag their drooping skirts over the hills when hearts long for their ending, or how it is only day by day, hour by hour, that they wear out at length, and fade into the past.

"'Now, my man, let's have no more of this,' said the leader of the gang. 'I'm not here to wait your leisure; come on.

"And now they are away—truly away—and the darkness settles down where this moment Katie saw her bridegroom's head bowing over the hands which still are wet with his tears. Twenty years! Her own words ring into her heart like a knell, a prophecy of evil—if he should be twenty years away!"

There is no exaggeration in the above narrative. Similar scenes have occurred on many occasions, and others of equally affecting character might be gathered from British sailors themselves. In the story of "Katie Stewart," ten years elapse before Willie Morison is permitted to return to his betrothed. In many cases the pressed seamen never catch a glimpse of home or friends again. Sometimes decoys and stratagems are used to press the seamen into the service of the government. Such extensive powers are intrusted to the

officers of men-of-war, that they may be guilty of the grossest violations of right and justice with impunity, and even those "protections" which the government extends to certain persons, are frequently of no effect whatever. In the novel of "Jacob Faithful," Captain Marryatt has given a fine illustration of the practice of some officers. The impressment of Jacob and Thomas the waterman, is told with Marryatt's usual spirit. Here it is:—

"'I say, you watermen, have you a mind for a good fare?' cried a dark-looking, not over clean, square built, short young man, standing on the top of the flight of steps.

"'Where to, sir?'

"'Gravesend, my jokers, if you a'n't afraid of salt water.'

"'That's a long way, sir!' replied Tom, 'and for salt water we must have salt to our porridge.'

"'So you shall, my lads, and a glass of grog into the bargain.'

"'Yes, but the bargain a'n't made yet, sir. Jacob, will you go?'

"'Yes, but not under a guinea.'

"'Not under two guineas,' replied Tom, aside.

"'Are you in a great hurry, sir?' continued he, addressing the young man.

"'Yes, in a devil of a hurry; I shall lose my ship. What will you take me for?'

"'Two guineas, sir.'

"'Very well. Just come up to the public-house here, and put in my traps.'

"We had brought down his luggage, put it into the wherry and started down the river with the tide. Our fare was very communicative, and we found out that he was master's mate of the Immortalité, forty-gun frigate, lying off Gravesend, which was to drop down the next morning, and wait for sailing orders at the Downs. We carried the tide with us, and in the afternoon were

close to the frigate, whose blue ensign waved proudly over the taffrail. There was a considerable sea arising from the wind meeting the tide, and before we arrived close to her, we had shipped a great deal of water; and when we were alongside, the wherry, with the chest in her bows, pitched so heavily, that we were afraid of being swamped. Just as a rope had been made fast to the chest, and they were weighing it out of the wherry, the ship's launch with water came alongside, and whether from accident or wilfully I know not, although I suspect the latter, the midshipman who steered her, shot her against the wherry, which was crushed in, and immediately filled, leaving Tom and me in the water, and in danger of being jammed to death between the launch and the side of the frigate. The seamen in the boat, however, forced her off with their oars, and hauled us in, while our wherry sank with her gunnel even with the water's edge, and floated away astern.

"As soon as we had shaken ourselves a little, we went up the side and asked one of the officers to send a boat to pick up our wherry.

"'Speak to the first lieutenant—there he is,' was the reply.

"I went up to the person pointed out to me: 'If you please sir'——

"'What the devil do you want?'

"'A boat, sir, to'——

"'A boat! the devil you do!'

"'To pick up our wherry, sir,' interrupted Tom.

"'Pick it up yourself,' said the first lieutenant, passing us and hailing the men aloft. 'Maintop there, hook on your stay. Be smart. Lower away the yards. Marines and afterguard, clear launch. Boatswain's-mate.'

"'Here, sir.'

"'Pipe marines and afterguard to clear launch.'

"'Ay, ay, sir.'

"'But we shall lose our boat, Jacob,' said Tom, to me. 'They stove it in, and they ought to pick it up.' Tom then went up to the master's-mate, whom we had brought on board, and explained our difficulty.

"'Upon my soul, I dar'n't say a word. I'm in a scrape for

breaking my leave. Why the devil didn't you take care of your wherry, and haul ahead when you saw the launch coming.'

"'How could we when the chest was hoisting out?'

"'Very true. Well, I'm very sorry for you, but I must look after my chest.' So saying, he disappeared down the gangway ladder.

"'I'll try it again, any how,' said Tom, going up to the first lieutenant. 'Hard case to lose our boat and our bread, sir,' said Tom, touching his hat.

"The first lieutenant, now that the marines and afterguard were at a regular stamp and go, had, unfortunately, more leisure to attend to us. He looked at us earnestly, and walked aft to see if the wherry was yet in sight. At that moment up came the master's-mate who had not yet reported himself to the first lieutenant.

"'Tom,' said I, 'there's a wherry close to; let us get into it, and go after our boat ourselves.'

"'Wait one moment to see if they will help us—and get our money, at all events,' replied Tom; and we walked aft.

"'Come on board, sir,' said the master's mate, touching his hat with humility.

"'You've broke your leave, sir,' replied the first lieutenant, 'and now I've to send a boat to pick up the wherry through your carelessness.'

"'If you please, they are two very fine young men,' observed the mate. 'Make capital foretop-men. Boat's not worth sending for, sir.'

"This hint, given by the mate to the first lieutenant, to regain his favour, was not lost. 'Who are you, my lads?' said the first lieutenant to us.

"'Watermen, sir.'

"'Watermen, hey! was that your own boat?'

"'No, sir,' replied I, 'it belonged to the man that I serve with.'

"'Oh! not your own boat? Are you an apprentice then?'

"'Yes, sir, both apprentices.'

"'Show me your indentures.'

"'We don't carry them about with us.'

"'Then how am I to know that you are apprentices?'

"'We can prove it, sir, if you wish it.'

"'I do wish it; at all events, the captain will wish it.'

"'Will you please to send for the boat, sir? she's almost out of sight.'

"'No, my lads, I can't find king's boats for such service.'

"'Then, we had better go ourselves, Tom,' said I, and we went forward to call the waterman who was lying on his oars close to the frigate.

"'Stop—stop—not so fast. Where are you going, my lads?'

"'To pick up our boat, sir.'

"'Without my leave, hey!'

"'We don't belong to the frigate, sir.'

"'No; but I think it very likely that you will, for you have no protections.'

"'We can send for them and have them down by to-morrow morning.'

"'Well, you may do so, if you please, my lads; you cannot expect me to believe every thing that is told me. Now, for instance, how long have you to serve, my lad?' said he, addressing Tom.

"'My time is up to-morrow, sir.'

"'Up to-morrow. Why, then, I shall detain you until to-morrow, and then I shall press you.'

"'If you detain me now, sir, I am pressed to-day.'

"'Oh no! you are only detained until you prove your apprenticeship, that's all.'

"'Nay, sir, I certainly am pressed during my apprenticeship.'

"'Not at all, and I'll prove it to you. You don't belong to the ship until you are victualled on her books. Now, I sha'n't *victual* you to-day, and therefore, you won't be *pressed*.'

"'I shall be pressed with hunger, at all events,' replied Tom, who never could lose a joke.

"'No, you sha'n't; for I'll send you both a good dinner out of the gun-room, so you won't be pressed at all,' replied the lieutenant, laughing at Tom's reply.

"You will allow me to go, sir, at all events,' replied I; 'for I

knew that the only chance of getting Tom and myself clear was by hastening to Mr. Drummond for assistance.

"'Pooh! nonsense; you must both row in the same boat as you have done. The fact is, my lads, I've taken a great fancy to you both, and I can't make up my mind to part with you.'

"'It's hard to lose our bread, this way,' replied I.

"'We will find you bread, and hard enough you will find it,' replied the lieutenant, laughing; 'it's like a flint.'

"'So we ask for bread, and you give us a stone,' said Tom; 'that's 'gainst Scripture.'

"'Very true, my lad; but the fact is, all the scriptures in the world won't man the frigate. Men we must have, and get them how we can, and where we can, and when we can. Necessity has no law; at least it obliges us to break through all laws. After all, there's no great hardship in serving the king for a year or two, and filling your pockets with prize-money. Suppose you volunteer?'

"'Will you allow us to go on shore for half an hour to think about it?' replied I.

"'No; I'm afraid of the crimps dissuading you. But, I'll give you till to-morrow morning, and then I shall be sure of one, at all events.'

"'Thanky, for me,' replied Tom.

"'You're very welcome,' replied the first lieutenant, as, laughing at us, he went down the companion ladder to his dinner.

"'Well, Jacob, we are in for it,' said Tom, as soon as we were alone. 'Depend upon it, there's no mistake this time.'

"'I'm afraid not,' replied I, 'unless we can get a letter to your father, or Mr. Drummond, who, I am sure, would help us. But that dirty fellow, who gave the first lieutenant the hint, said the frigate sailed to-morrow morning; there he is, let us speak to him.'

"'When does the frigate sail?' said Tom to the master's-mate, who was walking the deck.

"'My good fellow, it's not the custom on board of a man-of-war for men to ask officers to answer such impertinent questions. It's quite sufficient for you to know that when the frigate sails, you will have the honour of sailing in her.'

"'Well, sir,' replied I, nettled at his answer, 'at all events, you will have the goodness to pay us our fare. We have lost our wherry, and our liberty, perhaps, through you; we may as well have our two guineas.'

"'Two guineas! It's two guineas you want, heh?'

"'Yes, sir, that was the fare agreed upon.'

"'Why, you must observe, my men,' said the master's-mate, hooking a thumb into each arm-hole of his waistcoat, 'there must be a little explanation as to that affair. I promised you two guineas as watermen; but now that you belong to a man-of-war, you are no longer watermen. I always pay my debts honourably when I can find the lawful creditors; but where are the watermen?'

"'Here we are, sir.'

"'No, my lads, you are men-of-war's men now, and that quite alters the case."

"'But we are not so yet, sir: even if it did alter the case, we are not pressed yet.'

"'Well, then, you will be to-morrow, perhaps; at all events we shall see. If you are allowed to go on shore again, I owe you two guineas as watermen; and if you are detained as men-of-war's men, why then you will only have done your duty in pulling down one of your officers. You see, my lads, I say nothing but what's fair.'

"'Well, sir, but when you hired us, we were watermen,' replied Tom.

"'Very true, so you were; but recollect the two guineas were not due until you had completed your task, which was not until you came on board. When you came on board you were pressed and became men-of-war's men. You should have asked for your fare before the first lieutenant got hold of you. Don't you perceive the justice of my remarks?'

"'Can't say I do, sir; but I perceive that there is very little chance of our being paid,' said Tom.

"'You are a lad of discrimination,' replied the master's-mate; 'and now I advise you to drop the subject, or you may induce me to pay you man-of-war fashion.'

"'How's that, sir?'

"'Over the face and eyes, as the cat paid the monkey,' replied the master's-mate, walking leisurely away.

"No go, Tom,' said I, smiling at the absurdity of the arguments.

"'I'm afraid it's *no go*, in every way, Jacob. However, I don't care much about it. I have had a little hankering after seeing the world, and perhaps now's as well as any other time; but I'm sorry for you, Jacob.'

"'It's all my own fault,' replied I; and I fell into one of those reveries so often indulged in of late as to the folly of my conduct in asserting my independence, which had now ended in my losing my liberty. But we were cold from the ducking we had received, and moreover very hungry. The first lieutenant did not forget his promise: he sent us up a good dinner, and a glass of grog each, which we discussed under the half-deck between two of the guns. We had some money in our pockets, and we purchased some sheets of paper from the bumboat people, who were on the main-deck supplying the seamen; and I wrote to Mr. Drummond and Mr. Turnbull, as well as to Mary and old Tom, requesting the two latter to forward our clothes to Deal, in case of our being detained. Tom also wrote to comfort his mother, and the greatest comfort he could give was, as he said, to promise to keep sober. Having intrusted these letters to the bumboat women, who promised faithfully to put them into the post-office, we had then nothing else to do but to look out for some place to sleep. Our clothes had dried on us, and we were walking under the half-deck, but not a soul spoke to, or even took the least notice of us. In a newly manned ship, just ready to sail, there is a universal feeling of selfishness prevailing among the ship's company. Some, if not most, had, like us, been pressed, and their thoughts were occupied with their situation, and the change in their prospects. Others were busy making their little arrangements with their wives or relations; while the mass of the seamen, not yet organised by discipline, or known to each other, were in a state of disunion and individuality, which naturally induced every man to look after himself, without caring for his neighbour. We there

fore could not expect, nor did we receive any sympathy; we were in a scene of bustle and noise, yet alone. A spare topsail, which had been stowed for the present between two of the guns, was the best accommodation which offered itself. We took possession of it, and, tired with exertion of mind and body, were soon fast asleep."

In the mean time, doubtless, there was weeping and wailing at the homes of the pressed seamen. Parents, tottering on the verge of the grave, and deprived of their natural support—wives and children at the fireside, uncheered by the presence of the head of the family—could only weep for the absent ones, and pray that their government might one day cease to be tyrannical.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IRISH SLAVERY.

For centuries the Irish nation has groaned under the yoke of England. The chain has worn to the bone. The nation has felt its strength depart. Many of its noblest and fairest children have pined away in dungeons or starved by the roadside. The tillers of the soil, sweating from sunrise to sunset for a bare subsistence, have been turned from their miserable cabins—hovels, yet homes—and those who have been allowed to remain have had their substance devoured by a government seemingly never satisfied with the extent of its taxation. They have suffered unmitigated persecution for daring to have a religion of their own. Seldom has a conquered people suffered more from the cruelties and exactions of the conquerors. While Clarkson and Wilberforce were giving their untiring labours to the cause of emancipating negro slaves thousands of miles away, they overlooked a hideous system of slavery at their very doors—the slavery of a people capable of enjoying the highest degree of civil and religious freedom. Says William Howitt—

IRISH TENANT ABOUT TO EMIGRATE.

"The great grievance of Ireland—the Monster Grievance—is just England itself. The curse of Ireland is bad government, and nothing more. And who is the cause of this? Nobody but England. Who made Ireland a conquered country? England. Who introduced all the elements of wrangling, discontent, and injustice? England. Who set two hostile churches, and two hostile races, Celts and Saxons, together by the ears in that country? England, of course. Her massacres, her military plantations, her violent seizure of ancient estates, her favouritism, her monstrous laws and modes of government, were the modern emptying of Pandora's box—the shaking out of a bag-full of Kilkenny cats on the soil of that devoted country. The consequences are exactly those that we have before us. Wretched Saxon landlords, who have left one-fourth of the country uncultivated, and squeezed the population to death by extortion on the rest. A great useless church maintained on the property of the ejected Catholics—who do as men are sure to do, kick at robbery, and feel it daily making their gall doubly bitter. And then we shake our heads and sagely talk about race. If the race be bad, why have we not taken pains to improve it? Why, for scores of years, did we forbid them even to be educated? Why do we complain of their being idle and improvident, and helpless, when we have done every thing we could to make them so? Are our ministers and Parliaments any better? Are they not just as idle, and improvident, and helpless, as it regards Ireland? Has not this evil been growing these three hundred years? Have any remedies been applied but those of Elizabeth, and the Stuarts and Straffords, the Cromwells, and Dutch William's? Arms and extermination? We have built barracks instead of schools; we have sown gunpowder instead of corn—and now we wonder at the people and the crops. The wisest and best of men have for ages been crying out for reform and improvement in Ireland, and all that we have done has been to augment the army and the police."

The condition of the Irish peasantry has long been most miserable. Untiring toil for the lords of the soil

gives the labourers only such a living as an American slave would despise. Hovels fit for pig-styes—rags for clothing—potatoes for food—are the fruits of the labour of these poor wretches. A vast majority of them are attached to the Roman Catholic Church, yet they are compelled to pay a heavy tax for the support of the Established Church. This, and other exactions, eat up their little substance, and prevent them from acquiring any considerable property. Their poor homes are merely held by the sufferance of grasping agents for landlords, and they are compelled to submit to any terms he may prescribe or become wandering beggars, which alternative is more terrible to many of them than the whip would be.

O'Connell, the indomitable advocate of his oppressed countrymen, used the following language in his repeal declaration of July 27, 1841:—

"It ought to sink deep into the minds of the English aristocracy, that no people on the face of the earth pay to another such a tribute for permission to live, as Ireland pays to England in absentee rents and surplus revenues. There is no such instance; there is nothing like it in ancient or modern history. There is not, and there never was, such an exhausting process applied to any country as is thus applied to Ireland. It is a solecism in political economy, inflicted upon Ireland alone, of all the nations that are or ever were."

Surely it is slavery to pay such a price for a miserable existence. We cannot so abuse terms as to call a people situated as the Irish are, free. They are com-

pelled to labour constantly without receiving an approach to adequate compensation, and they have no means of escape except by sundering the ties of home, kindred, and country.

The various repulsive features of the Irish system can be illustrated much more fully than our limits will permit. But we will proceed to a certain extent, as it is in Ireland that the results of British tyranny have been most frightfully manifested.

The population of Ireland is chiefly agricultural, yet there are no agricultural labourers in the sense in which that term is employed in Great Britain. A peasant living entirely by hire, without land, is wholly unknown.

The persons who till the ground may be divided into three classes, which are sometimes distinguished by the names of small farmers, cottiers, and casual labourers; or, as the last are sometimes called, "con-acre" men.

The class of small farmers includes those who hold from five to twelve Irish acres. The cottiers are those who hold about two acres, in return for which they labour for the farmer of twenty acres or more, or for the gentry.

Con-acre is ground hired, not by the year, but for a single crop, usually of potatoes. The tenant of con-acre receives the land in time to plant potatoes, and surrenders it so soon as the crop has been secured. The farmer from whom he receives it usually ploughs

and manures the land, and sometimes carts the crop. Con-acre is taken by tradesmen, small farmers, and cottiers, but chiefly by labourers, who are, in addition, always ready to work for hire when there is employment for them. It is usually let in roods, and other small quantities, rarely exceeding half an acre. These three classes, not very distinct from each other, form the mass of the Irish population.

"According to the census of 1831," says Mr. Bicheno, "the population of Ireland was 7,767,401; the 'occupiers employing labourers' were 95,339; the 'labourers employed in agriculture,' (who do not exist in Ireland as a class corresponding to that in England,) and the 'occupiers not employing labourers,' amounted together to 1,131,715. The two last descriptions pretty accurately include the cottier tenants and cottier labourers; and, as these are nearly all heads of families, it may be inferred from hence how large a portion of the soil of Ireland is cultivated by a peasant tenantry; and when to these a further addition is made of a great number of little farmers, a tolerably accurate opinion may be formed of the insignificant weight and influence that any middle class in the rural districts can have, as compared with the peasants. Though many may occupy a greater extent of land than the 'cottiers,' and, if held immediately from the proprietor, generally at a more moderate rent, and may possess some trifling stock, almost all the inferior tenantry of Ireland belong to one class. The cottier and the little farmer have the same feelings, the same interests to watch over, and the same sympathies. Their diet and their clothing are not very dissimilar, though they may vary in quantity; and the one cannot be ordinarily distinguished from the other by any external appearance. Neither does the dress of the children of the little farmers mark any distinction of rank, as it does in England; while their wives are singularly deficient in the comforts of apparel."—*Report of Commissioners of Poor Inquiry.*

The whole population, small farmers, cottiers, and labourers, are equally devoid of capital. The small farmer holds his ten or twelve acres of land at a nominal rent—a rent determined not by what the land will yield, but by the intensity of the competition to obtain it. He takes from his farm a wretched subsistence, and gives over the remainder to his landlord. This remainder rarely equals the nominal rent, the growing arrears of which are allowed to accumulate against him.

The cottier labours constantly for his landlord, (or master, as he would have been termed of old,) and receives, for his wages as a serf, land which will afford him but a miserable subsistence. Badly off as these two classes are, their condition is still somewhat better than that of the casual labourer, who hires con-acre, and works for wages at seasons when employment can be had, to get in the first place the means of paying the rent for his con-acre.

Mr. Bicheno says—

"It appears from the evidence that the average crops of con-acre produce about as much or a little more, (at the usual price of potatoes in the autumn,) than the amount of the rent, seed, and tenant's labour, say 5*s.* or 10*s.* Beyond this the labourer does not seem to derive any other direct profit from taking con-acre; but he has the following inducements. In some cases he contracts to work out a part, or the whole, of his con-acre rent; and, even when this indulgence is not conceded to him by previous agreement, he always hopes, and endeavours to prevail on the farmer to be allowed this privilege, which, in general want

of employment, is almost always so much clear gain to him. By taking con-acre he also considers that he is *securing* food to the extent of the crop for himself and family at the low autumn price; whereas, if he had to go to market for it, he would be subject to the loss of time, and sometimes expense of carriage, to the fluctuations of the market, and to an advance of price in spring and summer."

Of the intensity of the competition for land, the following extracts from the evidence may give an idea:—

"*Galway*, F. 35.—'If I now let it be known that I had a farm of five acres to let, I should have fifty bidders in twenty-four hours, and all of them would be ready to promise any rent that might be asked.'—*Mr. Birmingham.* The landlord takes on account whatever portion of the rent the tenant may be able to offer; the remainder he does not remit, but allows to remain over. A remission of a portion of the rent in either plentiful or scarce seasons is never made as a matter of course; when it does take place, it is looked upon as a favour.

"'The labourer is, from the absence of any other means of subsisting himself and family, thrown upon the hire of land, and the land he must hire at any rate; the payment of the promised rent is an after consideration. He always offers such a rent as leaves him nothing of the produce for his own use but potatoes, his corn being entirely for his landlord's claim.'—*Rev. Mr. Hughes*, P. P., and *Parker.*

"*Leitrim*, F. 36 and 37.—'So great is the competition for small holdings, that, if a farm of five acres were vacant, I really believe that nine out of every ten men in the neighbourhood would bid for it if they thought they had the least chance of getting it: they would be prepared to outbid each other, *ad infinitum*, in order to get possession of the land. *The rent which the people themselves would deem moderate, would not in any case admit of their making use of any other food than potatoes;* there are even many instances in this barony where the occupier cannot feed himself and family off the land he holds. In his anxiety to grow

as much oats (his only marketable produce) as will meet the various claims upon him, he devotes so small a space to the cultivation of potatoes, that he is obliged to take a portion of conacre, and to pay for it by wages earned at a time when he would have been better employed on his own account.'—*Rev. T. Maguire*, P. P."

The land is subdivided into such small portions, that the labourer has not sufficient to grow more than a very scanty provision for himself and family. The better individuals of the class manage to secrete some of its produce from the landlord, to do which it is of course necessary that they should not employ it on their land: but if land is offered to be let, persons will be found so eager for it as to make compliments to some one of the family of the landlord or of his agent.

The exactions of agents and sub-agents are the most frequent causes of suffering among the peasantry. These agents are a class peculiar to Ireland. They take a large extent of ground, which they let out in small portions to the real cultivator. They grant leases sometimes, but the tenant is still in their power, and they exact personal services, presents, bribes; and draw from the land as much as they can, without the least regard for its permanent welfare. That portion of the poor peasant's substance which escapes the tithes and tax of government is seized by the remorseless agents, and thus the wretched labourer can get but a miserable subsistence by the severest toil.

In general the tenant takes land, promising to pay a

"nominal rent," in other words, a rent he never can pay. This rent falls into arrear, and the landlord allows the arrear to accumulate against him, in the hope that if he should chance to have an extraordinary crop, or if he should obtain it from any unexpected source, the landlord may claim it for his arrears.

The report of Poor-Law Commissioners states that "Agricultural wages vary from 6*d.* to 1*s.* a day; that the average of the country in general is about 8½*d.*; and that the earnings of the labourers, on an average of the whole class, are from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, or thereabout."

"Thus circumstanced, it is impossible for the able-bodied, in general, to provide against sickness or the temporary absence of employment, or against old age or the destitution of their widows and children in the contingent event of their own premature decease.

"A great portion of them are insufficiently provided at any time with the commonest necessaries of life. Their habitations are wretched hovels; several of a family sleep together upon straw or upon the bare ground, sometimes with a blanket, sometimes not even so much to cover them; their food commonly consists of dry potatoes, and with these they are at times so scantily supplied as to be obliged to stint themselves to one spare meal in the day. There are even instances of persons being driven by hunger to seek sustenance in wild herbs. They sometimes get a herring, or a little milk, but they never get meat, except at Christmas, Easter, and Shrovetide."

The peasant finds himself obliged to live upon the cheapest food, *potatoes*, and potatoes of the worst quality, because they yield most, and are consequently the

cheapest. These potatoes are "little better than turnips." "Lumpers" is the name given to them. They are two degrees removed from those which come ordinarily to our tables, and which are termed "apples." Mr. Bicheno says, describing the three sorts of potatoes—apples, cups, and lumpers—

"The first named are of the best quality, but produce the least in quantity; the cups are not so good in quality as the apples, but produce more; and the lumpers are the worst of the three in quality, but yield the heaviest crop. For these reasons the apples are generally sent to Dublin and other large towns for sale. The cups are grown for the consumption of smaller towns, and are eaten by the larger farmers, and the few of the small occupiers and labourers who are in better circumstances than the generality of their class; and the lumpers are grown by large farmers for stall-feeding cattle, and by most of the small occupiers and all the labourers (except a few in constant employment, and having but small families) for their own food. Though most of the small occupiers and labourers grow apples and cups, they do not use them themselves, with the few exceptions mentioned, except as holiday fare, and as a little indulgence on particular occasions. They can only afford to consume the lumpers, or coarsest quality, themselves, on account of the much larger produce and consequent cheapness of that sort. The apples yield 10 to 15 per cent. less than the cups, and the cups 10 to 15 per cent. less than the lumpers, making a difference of 20 to 30 per cent. between the produce of the best and the worst qualities. To illustrate the practice and feeling of the country in this respect, the following occurrence was related by one of the witnesses:—'A landlord, in passing the door of one of his tenants, a small occupier, who was in arrears with his rent, saw one of his daughters washing potatoes at the door, and perceiving that they were of the apple kind, asked her if they were intended for their dinner. Upon being answered that they were,

he entered the house, and asked the tenant what he meant by eating *apple* potatoes when they were fetching so good a price in Dublin, and while he did not pay him (the landlord) his rent?'"

Lumpers, dry, that is, without milk or any other addition to them, are the ordinary food of the people. The pig which is seen in most Irish cabins, and the cow and fowls kept by the small farmers, go to market to pay the rent; even the eggs are sold. Small farmers, as well as labourers, rarely have even milk to their potatoes.

The following graphic description of an Irish peasant's home, we quote from the Pictorial Times, of February 7, 1846. Some districts in Ireland are crowded with such hovels:—

"*Cabin of J. Donoghue.*—The hovel to which the eye is now directed scarcely exceeds Donoghue's length. He will have almost as much space when laid in his grave. He can stand up in no part of his cabin except the centre; and yet he is not an aged man, who has outlived all his connections, and with a frame just ready to mingle with its native dust. Nor is he a bachelor, absolutely impenetrable to female charms, or looking out for some damsel to whom he may be united, 'for better or for worse.' Donoghue, the miserable inmate of that hovel, on the contrary, has a wife and three children; and these, together with a dog, a pig, and sundry fowls, find in that cabin their common abode. Human beings and brutes are there huddled together; and the motive to the occupancy of the former is just the same as that which operates to the keeping of the latter—what they produce. Did not the pig and the fowls make money, Donoghue would have none; did not Donoghue pay his rent, the cabin would quickly have another tenant. Indeed, his rent is only paid, and he and

his family saved from being turned adrift into the wide world, by his pig and his fowls.

"But the cabin should be examined more particularly. It has a hole for a door, it has another for a window, it has a third through which the smoke may find vent, and nothing more. No resemblance to the door of an English cottage, however humble, nor the casement it is never without, nor even the rudest chimney from which the blue smoke arises, suggesting to the observer many ideas of comfort for its inmates, can possibly be traced. The walls, too, are jet black; and that which ought to be a floor is mud, thick mud, full of holes. The bed of the family is sod. The very cradle is a sort of swing suspended from the roof, and it is set in motion by the elbow of the wretched mother of the wretched child it contains, if she is not disposed to make use of her hands.

"The question may fairly be proposed—What comfort can a man have in such circumstances? Can he find some relief from his misery, as many have found and still find it, by conversing with his wife? No. To suppose this, is to imagine him standing in a higher class of beings than the one of which he has always formed a part. Like himself, too, his wife is oppressed; the growth of her faculties is stunted; and, it may be, she is hungry, faint, and sick. Can he talk with his children? No. What can he, who knows nothing, tell them? What hope can he stimulate who has nothing to promise? Can he ask in a neighbour? No. He has no hospitality to offer him, and the cabin is crowded with his own family. Can he accost a stranger who may travel in the direction of his hovel, to make himself personally acquainted with his condition and that of others? No. He speaks a language foreign to an Englishman or a Scotchman, and which those who hate the 'Saxon,' whatever compliments they may pay him for their own purposes, use all the means they possess to maintain. Can he even look at his pig with the expectation that he will one day eat the pork or the bacon it will yield? No; not he. He knows that not a bone of the loin or a rasher will be his. That pig will go, like all the pigs he has had, to pay his rent. Only one comfort remains, which he has in common with his pig

and his dog, the warmth of his peat fire. Poor Donoghue! thou belongest to a race often celebrated as 'the finest peasantry in the world,' but it would be difficult to find a savage in his native forest who is not better off than thou!"

There is one other comfort besides the peat fire, which Donoghue may have, and that is an occasional gill of whisky—a temporary comfort, an ultimate destruction—a new fetter to bind him down in his almost brutal condition. In Ireland, as in England, intoxication is the Lethe in which the heart-sick labourers strive to forget their sorrows. Intemperance prevails most where poverty is most generally felt.

The Pictorial Times thus sketches a cabin of the better class, belonging to a man named Pat Brennan:—

"We will enter it, and look round with English eyes. We will do so, too, in connection with the remembrance of an humble dwelling in England. There we find at least a table, but here there is none. There we find some chairs, but here there are none. There we find a cupboard, but here there is none. There we find some crockery and earthenware, but here there is none. There we find a clock, but here there is none. There we find a bed, bedstead, and coverings, but here there are none. There is a brick, or stone, or boarded floor, but here there is none. What a descent would an English agricultural labourer have to make if he changed situations with poor Pat Brennan, who is better off than most of the tenants of Derrynane Beg, and it may be in the best condition of them all! Brennan's cabin has one room, in which he and his family live, of course with the fowls and pigs. One end is partitioned off in the manner of a loft, the loft being the potato store. The space underneath, where the fire is kindled,

has side spaces for seats. In some instances, the turf-bed is on one side and the seats on the other. The other contents of the dwelling are—a milk-pail, a pot, a wooden bowl or two, a platter, and a broken ladder. A gaudy picture of the Virgin Mary may sometimes be seen in such cabins."

The eviction of the wretched peasantry has caused an immense amount of misery, and crowds of the evicted ones have perished from starvation. The tillers of the soil are mere tenants at will, and may be ejected from their homes without a moment's notice. A whim of the landlord, the failure of the potato crop, or of the ordinary resources of the labourers, by which they are rendered unable to pay their rent for a short time, usually results in an edict of levelling and extermination. A recent correspondent of the London Illustrated News, thus describes the desolation of an Irish village:—

"The village of Killard forms part of the Union of Kilrush, and possesses an area of 17,022 acres. It had a population, in 1841, of 6850 souls, and was valued to the poor-rate at £4254. It is chiefly the property, I understand, of Mr. John McMahon Blackall, whose healthy residence is admirably situated on the brow of a hill, protected by another ridge from the storms of the Atlantic. His roof-tree yet stands there, but the people have disappeared. The village was mostly inhabited by fishermen, who united with their occupation on the waters the cultivation of potatoes. When the latter failed, it might have been expected that the former should have been pursued with more vigour than ever; but boats and lines were sold for present subsistence, and to the failure of the potatoes was added the abandonment of the fisheries. The rent dwindled to nothing, and then came the

leveller and the exterminator. What has become of the 6850 souls, I know not; but not ten houses remain of the whole village to inform the wayfarer where, according to the population returns, they were to be found in 1841. They were here, but are gone for ever; and all that remains of their abodes are a few mouldering walls, and piles of offensive thatch turning into manure. Killard is an epitome of half Ireland. If the abodes of the people had not been so slight, that they have mingled, like Babylon, with their original clay, Ireland would for ages be renowned for its ruins; but, as it is, the houses are swept away like the people, and not a monument remains of a multitude, which, in ancient Asia or in the wilds of America, would numerically constitute a great nation."

The same correspondent mentions a number of other instances of the landlord's devastation, and states that large tracts of fertile land over which he passed were lying waste, while the peasantry were starving by the roadside, or faring miserably in the workhouses. At Carihaken, in the county of Galway, the levellers had been at work, and had tumbled down eighteen houses. The correspondent says—

"In one of them dwelt John Killian, who stood by me while I made a sketch of the remains of his dwelling. He told me that he and his fathers before him had owned this now ruined cabin for ages, and that he had paid £4 a year for four acres of ground. He owed no rent; before it was due, the landlord's drivers cut down his crops, carried them off, gave him no account of the proceeds, and then tumbled his house. The hut made against the end wall of a former habitation was not likely to remain, as a decree had gone forth entirely to clear the place. The old man also told me that his son having cut down, on the spot that was once his own garden, a few sticks to make him a shelter, was

taken up, prosecuted, and sentenced to two months' confinement, for destroying trees and making waste of the property.

"I must supply you with another sketch of a similar subject, on the road between Maam and Clifden, in Joyce's County, once famous for the Patagonian stature of the inhabitants, who are now starved down to ordinary dimensions. High up on the mountain, but on the roadside, stands the scalpeen of Keillines. It is near General Thompson's property. Conceive five human beings living in such a hole: the father was out, at work; the mother was getting fuel on the hills, and the children left in the hut could only say they were hungry. Their appearance confirmed their words—want was deeply engraved in their faces, and their lank bodies were almost unprotected by clothing.

"From Clifden to Ouchterade, twenty-one miles, is a dreary drive over a moor, unrelieved except by a glimpse of Mr. Martin's house at Ballynahinch, and of the residence of Dean Mahon. Destitute as this tract is of inhabitants, about Ouchterade some thirty houses have been recently demolished. A gentleman who witnessed the scene told me nothing could exceed the heartlessness of the levellers, if it were not the patient submission of the sufferers. They wept, indeed; and the children screamed with agony at seeing their homes destroyed and their parents in tears; but the latter allowed themselves unresistingly to be deprived of what is to most people the dearest thing on earth next to their lives—their only home.

"The public records, my own eyes, a piercing wail of wo throughout the land—all testify to the vast extent of the evictions at the present time. Sixteen thousand and odd persons unhoused in the Union of Kilrush before the month of June in the present year; seventy-one thousand one hundred and thirty holdings done away in Ireland, and nearly as many houses destroyed, in 1848; two hundred and fifty-four thousand holdings of more than one acre and less than five acres, put an end to between 1841 and 1848: six-tenths, in fact, of the lowest class of tenantry driven from their now roofless or annihilated cabins and houses, makes up the general description of that desolation of which Tullig and Mooven are examples. The ruin is great and

complete. The blow that effected it was irresistible. It came in the guise of charity and benevolence; it assumed the character of the last and best friend of the peasantry, and it has struck them to the heart. They are prostrate and helpless. The once frolicksome people—even the saucy beggars—have disappeared, and given place to wan and haggard objects, who are so resigned to their doom that they no longer expect relief. One beholds only shrunken frames, scarcely covered with flesh—crawling skeletons, who appear to have risen from their graves, and are ready to return frightened to that abode. They have little other covering than that nature has bestowed on the human body—a poor protection against inclement weather; and, now that the only hand from which they expected help is turned against them, even hope is departed, and they are filled with despair. Than the present Earl of Carlisle there is not a more humane nor a kinder-hearted nobleman in the kingdom; he is of high honour and unsullied reputation; yet the poor-law he was mainly the means of establishing for Ireland, with the best intentions, has been one of the chief causes of the people being at this time turned out of their homes, and forced to burrow in holes, and share, till they are discovered, the ditches and the bogs with otters and snipes.

"The instant the poor-law was passed, and property was made responsible for poverty, the whole of the land-owners, who had before been careless about the people, and often allowed them to plant themselves on untenanted spots, or divide their tenancies—delighted to get the promise of a little additional rent—immediately became deeply interested in preventing that, and in keeping down the number of the people. Before they had rates to pay, they cared nothing for them; but the law and their self-interest made them care, and made them extirpators. Nothing less than some general desire like that of cupidity falling in with an enactment, and justified by a theory—nothing less than a passion which works silently in all, and safely under the sanction of a law—could have effected such wide-spread destruction. Even humanity was enlisted by the poor-law on the side of extirpation. As long as there was no legal provision for the poor, a

landlord had some repugnance to drive them from every shelter; but the instant the law took them under its protection, and forced the land-owner to pay a rate to provide for them, repugnance ceased: they had a legal home, however inefficient, to go to; and eviction began. Even the growth of toleration seems to have worked to the same end. Till the Catholics were emancipated, they were all—rich and poor, priests and peasants—united by a common bond; and Protestant landlords beginning evictions on a great scale would have roused against them the whole Catholic nation. It would have been taken up as a religious question, as well as a question of the poor, prior to 1829. Subsequent to that time—with a Whig administration, with all offices open to Catholics—no religious feelings could mingle with the matter: eviction became a pure question of interest; and while the priests look now, perhaps, as much to the government as to their flocks for support, Catholic landlords are not behind Protestant landlords in clearing their estates."

The person from whom we make the above quotation visited Ireland after the famine consequent upon the failure of the potato crop had done its worst—in the latter part of 1849. But famine seems to prevail, to a certain extent, at all times, in that unhappy land—and thus it is clear that the accidental failure of a crop has less to do with the misery of the people than radical misgovernment.

"To the Irish, such desolation is nothing new. They have long been accustomed to this kind of skinning. Their history, ever since it was written, teems with accounts of land forcibly taken from one set of owners and given to another; of clearings and plantings exactly similar in principle to that which is now going on; of driving men from Leinster to Munster, from Munster to Connaught, and from Connaught into the sea. Without going back

to ancient proscriptions and confiscations—all the land having been, between the reign of Henry II. and William III. confiscated, it is affirmed, three times over—we must mention that the clearing so conspicuous in 1848 has now been going on for several years. The total number of holdings in 1841, of above one acre, and not exceeding five acres each, was 310,375; and, in 1847, they had been diminished to 125,926. In that single class of holdings, therefore, 184,449, between 1841 and 1847 inclusive, had been done away with, and 24,147 were extinguished in 1848. Within that period, the number of farms of five acres and upward, particularly of farms of thirty acres and upward, was increased 210,229, the latter class having increased by 108,474. Little or no fresh land was broken up; and they, therefore, could only have been formed by amassing in these larger farms numerous small holdings. Before the year 1847, therefore, before 1846, when the potato rot worked so much mischief, even before 1845, the process of clearing the land, of putting down homesteads and consolidating farms, had been carried to a great extent; before any provision had been made by a poor-law for the evicted families, before the turned-out labourers and little farmers had even the workhouse for a refuge, multitudes had been continually driven from their homes to a great extent, as in 1848. The very process, therefore, on which government now relies for the present relief and the future improvement of Ireland, was begun and was carried to a great extent several years before the extremity of distress fell upon it in 1846. We are far from saying that the potato rot was caused by the clearing system; but, by disheartening the people, by depriving them of security, by contributing to their recklessness, by paralyzing their exertions, by promoting outrages, that system undoubtedly aggravated all the evils of that extraordinary visitation."—*Illustrated News*, October 13, 1849.

The correspondent of the News saw from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty funerals of victims to the want of food, the whole number

MULLIN'S HUT AT SCULL.

attended by not more than fifty persons. So hardened were the men regularly employed in the removal of the dead from the workhouse, that they would drive to the churchyard sitting upon the coffins, and smoking with apparent enjoyment. These men had evidently "supped full of horrors." A funeral was no solemnity to them. They had seen the wretched peasants in the madness of starvation, and death had come as a soothing angel. Why should the quieted sufferers be lamented?

A specimen of the in-door horrors of Scull may be seen in the sketch of a hut of a poor man named Mullins, who lay dying in a corner, upon a heap of straw supplied by the Relief Committee, while his three wretched children crouched over a few embers of turf, as if to raise the last remaining spark of life. This poor man, it appears, had buried his wife about five days before, and was, in all probability, on the eve of joining her, when he was found out by the efforts of the vicar, who, for a few short days, saved him from that which no kindness could ultimately avert. The dimensions of Mullins's hut did not exceed ten feet square, and the dirt and filth was ankle-deep upon the floor.

"Commander Caffin, the captain of the steam-sloop *Scourge*, on the south coast of Ireland, has written a letter to a friend, dated February 15, 1847, in which he gives a most distressing and graphic account of the scenes he witnessed in the course of his duty in discharging a cargo of meal at Scull. After stating

that three-fourths of the inhabitants carry a tale of wo in their countenances, and are reduced to mere skeletons, he mentions the result of what he saw while going through the parish with the rector, Dr. Traill. He says—

"'Famine exists to a fearful degree, with all its horrors. Fever has sprung up, consequent upon the wretchedness; and swellings of limbs and body, and diarrhœa, upon the want of nourishment, are everywhere to be found. Dr. Traill's parish is twenty-one miles in extent, containing about eighteen thousand souls, with not more than half a dozen gentlemen in the whole of it. He drove me about five or six miles; but we commenced our visits before leaving the village, and in no house that I entered was there not to be found the dead or dying. In particularizing two or three, they may be taken as the features of the whole. There was no picking or choosing, but we took them just as they came.

"'The first which I shall mention was a cabin, rather above the ordinary ones in appearance and comfort; in it were three young women, and one young man, and three children, all crouched over a fire—pictures of misery. Dr. Traill asked after the father, upon which one of the girls opened a door leading into another cabin, and there were the father and mother in bed; the father the most wretched picture of starvation possible to conceive, a skeleton with life, his power of speech gone; the mother but a little better—her cries for mercy and food were heart-rending. It was sheer destitution that had brought them to this. They had been well to do in the world, with their cow, and few sheep, and potato-ground. Their crops failed, and their cattle were stolen; although, anticipating this, they had taken their cow and sheep into the cabin with them every night, but they were stolen in the daytime. The son had worked on the road, and earned his 8*d*. a day, but this would not keep the family, and he, from work and insufficiency of food, is laid up, and will soon be as bad as his father. They had nothing to eat in the house, and I could see no hope for any one of them.

"'In another cabin we went into, a mother and her daughter were there—the daughter emaciated, and lying against the wall—the mother naked upon some straw on the ground, with a rug

over her—a most distressing object of misery. She writhed about, and bared her limbs, in order to show her state of exhaustion. She had wasted away until nothing but the skin covered the bones—she cannot have survived to this time.

"'Another that I entered had, indeed, the appearance of wretchedness without, but its inside was misery! Dr. Traill, on putting his head inside the hole which answered for a door, said, 'Well, Philis, how is your mother to-day?'—he having been with her the day before—and was replied to, 'Oh, sir, is it you? Mother is dead!' and there, fearful reality, was the daughter, a skeleton herself, crouched and crying over the lifeless body of her mother, which was on the floor, cramped up as she had died, with her rags and her cloak about her, by the side of a few embers of peat. In the next cabin were three young children belonging to the daughter, whose husband had run away from her, all pictures of death. The poor creature said she did not know what to do with the corpse—she had no means of getting it removed, and she was too exhausted to remove it herself: this cabin was about three miles from the rectory. In another cabin, the door of which was stopped with dung, was a poor woman whom we had taken by surprise, as she roused up evidently much astonished. She burst into tears upon seeing the doctor, and said she had not been enabled to sleep since the corpse of the woman had lain in her bed. This was a poor creature who was passing this miserable cabin, and asked the old woman to allow her to rest herself for a few moments, when she had laid down, but never rose up again; she died in an hour or so, from sheer exhaustion. The body had remained in this hovel of six feet square with the poor old woman for four days, and she could not get anybody to remove it.'

"The letter proceeds:—

"'I could in this manner take you through the thirty or more cottages we visited; but they, without exception, were all alike—the dead and the dying in each; and I could tell you more of the truth of the heart-rending scene were I to mention the lamentations and bitter cryings of each of these poor creatures on the threshold of death. Never in my life have I seen such whole-

sale misery, nor could I have thought it so complete.'"—*Illustrated News*, February 20, 1847. [At this period, famine prevailed throughout Ireland.]

At the village of Mienils, a man named Leahey perished during the great famine, with many circumstances of horror. When too weak, from want of food, to help himself, he was stretched in his filthy hovel, when his famished dogs attacked and so mangled him that he expired in intense agony. Can the history of any other country present such terrible instances of misery and starvation? The annals of Ireland have been dark, indeed; and those who have wilfully cast that gloom upon them, must emancipate Africans, and evangelize the rest of mankind, for a century, at least, to lay the ghosts of the murdered Irish.

An Irish funeral of later days, with its attendant circumstances of poverty and gloom, is truly calculated to stir the sensitive heart of a poet. The obsequies display the meagre results of attempts to bury the dead with decency. The mourners are few, but their grief is sincere; and they weep for the lost as they would be wept for when Death, who is ever walking by their side, lays his cold hand on them. During the great famine, some poor wretches perished while preparing funerals for their friends. In the following verses, published in Howitt's Journal, of the 1st of April, 1847, we have a fine delineation of an Irish funeral, such as only a poet could give:—

## AN IRISH FUNERAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ORION."

"Funerals performed."—*London* Trades.

"On Wednesday, the remains of a poor woman, who died of hunger, were carried to their last resting-place by three women, and a blind man the son-in-law of the deceased. The distance between the wretched hut of the deceased and the grave-yard was nearly three miles."—*Tuam Herald.*

Heavily plod
Highroad and sod,
With the cold corpse clod
Whose soul is with God!

An old door's the hearse
Of the skeleton corpse,
And three women bear it,
With a blind man to share it:
Over flint, over bog,
They stagger and jog:—
Weary, and hungry, and hopeless, and cold,
They slowly bear onward the bones to the mould.
Heavily plod
Highroad and sod,
With the cold corpse clod,
Whose soul is with God!

Barefoot ye go,
Through the frost, through the snow;
Unsteady and slow,
Your hearts mad with woe;

Bewailing and blessing the poor rigid clod—
The dear dead-and-cold one, whose soul is with God.
Heavily plod
Highroad and sod,
This ruin and rod
Are from man—and not God!

Now out spake her sister,—
"Can we be quite sure
Of the mercy of Heaven,
Or that Death is Life's cure?
A cure for the misery, famine, and pains,
Which our cold rulers view as the end of their gains?"
Heavily plod
Highroad and sod,
With the cold corpse clod,
Whose soul is with God!

"In a land where's plenty,"
The old mother said,—
"But not for poor creatures
Who pawn rags and bed—
There's plenty for rich ones, and those far away,
Who drain off our life-blood, so thoughtless and gay!"
Heavily plod
Highroad and sod,
With the cold corpse clod,
Whose soul is with God!

Then wailed the third woman—
"The darling was worth
The rarest of jewels
That shine upon earth.
When hunger was gnawing her—wasted and wild—
She shared her last morsel with my little child."

Heavily plod
Highroad and sod,
With the cold corpse clod,
Whose soul is with God!

"O Christ!' pray'd the blind man,
"We are not so poor,
Though we bend 'neath the dear weight
That crushes this door;
For we know that the grave is the first step to Heaven,
And a birthright we have in the riches there given."
Heavily plod,
Highroad and sod,
With the cold corpse clod,
Whose soul is with God!

What wonder if the evicted peasants of Ireland, made desperate by the tyranny of the landlords, sometimes make "a law unto themselves," and slay their oppressors! Rebellion proves manhood under such circumstances. Instances of landlords being murdered by evicted tenants are numerous. In the following sketch we have a vivid illustration of this phase of Irish life:—

"The moorland was wide, level, and black; black as night, if you could suppose night condensed on the surface of the earth, and that you could tread on solid darkness in the midst of day. The day itself was fast dropping into night, although it was dreary and gloomy at the best; for it was a November day. The moor, for miles around, was treeless and houseless; devoid of vegetation, except heather, which clad with its gloomy frieze coat the shivering landscape. At a distance you could discern, through the misty atmosphere, the outline of mountains apparently as bare and stony

as this wilderness, which they bounded. There were no fields, no hedgerows, no marks of the hand of man, except the nakedness itself, which was the work of man in past ages; when, period after period, he had tramped over the scene with fire and sword, and left all that could not fly before him, either ashes to be scattered by the savage winds, or stems of trees, and carcasses of men trodden into the swampy earth. As the Roman historians said of other destroyers, 'They created solitude, and called it peace.' That all this was the work of man, and not of Nature, any one spot of this huge and howling wilderness could testify, if you would only turn up its sable surface. In its bosom lay thousands of ancient oaks and pines, black as ebony; which told, by their gigantic bulk, that forests must have once existed on this spot, as rich as the scene was now bleak. Nobler things than trees lay buried there; but were, for the most part, resolved into the substance of the inky earth. The dwellings of men had left few or no traces, for they had been consumed in flames; and the hearts that had loved, and suffered, and perished beneath the hand of violence and insult, were no longer human hearts, but slime. If a man were carried blindfold to that place, and asked when his eyes were unbandaged where he was, he would say—'Ireland!'

"He would want no clue to the identity of the place, but the scene before him. There is no heath like an Irish heath. There is no desolation like an Irish desolation. Where Nature herself has spread the expanse of a solitude, it is a cheerful solitude. The air flows over it lovingly: the flowers nod and dance in gladness; the soil breathes up a spirit of wild fragrance, which communicates a buoyant sensation to the heart. You feel that you tread on ground where the peace of God, and not the 'peace' of man created in the merciless hurricane of war, has sojourned: where the sun shone on creatures sporting on ground or on tree, as the Divine Goodness of the Universe meant them to sport: where the hunter disturbed alone the enjoyment of the lower animals by his own boisterous joy: where the traveller sang as he went over it, because he felt a spring of inexpressible music in his heart: where the weary wayfarer sat beneath a bush, and blessed God, though his limbs ached with travel, and his goal was far off. In God's deserts

dwells gladness; in man's deserts, death. A melancholy smites you as you enter them. There is a darkness from the past that envelopes your heart, and the moans and sighs of ten-times perpetrated misery seem still to live in the very winds.

"One shallow and widely spread stream struggled through the moor; sometimes between masses of gray stone. Sedges and the white-headed cotton-rush whistled on its margin, and on island-like expanses that here and there rose above the surface of its middle course.

"I have said that there was no sign of life; but on one of those gray stones stood a heron watching for prey. He had remained straight, rigid, and motionless for hours. Probably his appetite was appeased by his day's success among the trout of that dark red-brown stream, which was coloured by the peat from which it oozed. When he did move, he sprang up at once, stretched his broad wings, and silent as the scene around him, made a circuit in the air; rising higher as he went, with slow and solemn flight. He had been startled by a sound. There was life in the desert now. Two horsemen came galloping along a highway not far distant, and the heron, continuing his grave gyrations, surveyed them as he went. Had they been travellers over a plain of India, an Austrian waste, or the pampas of South America, they could not have been grimmer of aspect, or more thoroughly children of the wild. They were Irish from head to foot.

"They were mounted on two spare but by no means clumsy horses. The creatures had marks of blood and breed that had been introduced by the English to the country. They could claim, if they knew it, lineage of Arabia. The one was a pure bay, the other and lesser, was black; but both were lean as death, haggard as famine. They were wet with the speed with which they had been hurried along. The soil of the damp moorland, or of the field in which, during the day, they had probably been drawing the peasant's cart, still smeared their bodies, and their manes flew as wildly and untrimmed as the sedge or the cotton-rush on the wastes through which they careered. Their riders, wielding each a heavy stick instead of a riding-whip, which they applied ever and anon to the shoulders or flanks of their smoking animals, were mounted on

their bare backs, and guided them by halter instead of bridle. They were a couple of the short frieze-coated, knee-breeches and gray-stocking fellows who are as plentiful on Irish soil as potatoes. From beneath their narrow-brimmed, old, weather-beaten hats, streamed hair as unkemped as their horses' manes. The Celtic physiognomy was distinctly marked—the small and somewhat up-turned nose; the black tint of skin; the eye now looking gray, now black; the freckled cheek, and sandy hair. Beard and whiskers covered half the face, and the short square-shouldered bodies were bent forward with eager impatience, as they thumped and kicked along their horses, muttering curses as they went.

"The heron, sailing on broad and seemingly slow vans, still kept them in view. Anon, they reached a part of the moorland where traces of human labour were visible. Black piles of peat stood on the solitary ground, ready, after a summer's cutting and drying. Presently patches of cultivation presented themselves; plots of ground raised on beds, each a few feet wide, with intervening trenches to carry off the boggy water, where potatoes had grown, and small fields where grew more stalks of ragwort than grass, inclosed by banks cast up and tipped here and there with a brier or a stone. It was the husbandry of misery and indigence. The ground had already been freshly manured by sea-weeds, but the village—where was it? Blotches of burnt ground, scorched heaps of rubbish, and fragments of blackened walls, alone were visible. Garden-plots were trodden down, and their few bushes rent up, or hung with tatters of rags. The two horsemen, as they hurried by with gloomy visages, uttered no more than a single word: 'Eviction!'

"Further on, the ground heaved itself into a chaotic confusion. Stony heaps swelled up here and there, naked, black, and barren: the huge bones of the earth protruded themselves through her skin. Shattered rocks arose, sprinkled with bushes, and smoke curled up from what looked like mere heaps of rubbish, but which were in reality human habitations. Long dry grass hissed and rustled in the wind on their roofs, (which were sunk by-places, as if falling in;) and pits of reeking filth seemed placed exactly to prevent access to some of the low doors; while to others, a few stepping-stones made that access only possible. Here the two riders stopped, and

hurriedly tying their steeds to an elder-bush, disappeared in one of the cabins.

"The heron slowly sailed on to the place of its regular roost. Let us follow it.

"Far different was this scene to those the bird had left. Lofty trees darkened the steep slopes of a fine river. Rich meadows lay at the feet of woods and stretched down to the stream. Herds of cattle lay on them, chewing their cuds after the plentiful grazing of the day. The white walls of a noble house peeped, in the dusk of night, through the fertile timber which stood in proud guardianship of the mansion; and broad winding walks gave evidence of a place where nature and art had combined to form a paradise. There were ample pleasure-grounds. Alas! the grounds around the cabins over which the heron had so lately flown, might be truly styled pain-grounds.

"Within that home was assembled a happy family. There was the father, a fine-looking man of forty. Proud you would have deemed him, as he sate for a moment abstracted in his cushioned chair; but a moment afterward, as a troop of children came bursting into the room, his manner was instantly changed into one so pleasant, so playful, and so overflowing with enjoyment, that you saw him only as an amiable, glad, domestic man. The mother, a handsome woman, was seated already at the tea-table; and, in another minute, sounds of merry voices and childish laughter were mingled with the jocose tones of the father, and the playful accents of the mother; addressed, now to one, now to another of the youthful group.

"In due time the merriment was hushed, and the household assembled for evening prayer. A numerous train of servants assumed their accustomed places. The father read. He had paused once or twice, and glanced with a stern and surprised expression toward the group of domestics, for he heard sounds that astonished him from one corner of the room near the door. He went on—'Remember the children of Edom, O Lord, in the day of judgment, how they said, Down with it, down with it, even to the ground. O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery, yea, happy shall he be who rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us!'

"There was a burst of smothered sobs from the same corner, and the master's eye flashed with a strange fire as he again darted a glance toward the offender. The lady looked equally surprised, in the same direction; then turned a meaning look on her husband —a warm flush was succeeded by a paleness in her countenance, and she cast down her eyes. The children wondered, but were still. Once more the father's sonorous voice continued—'Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.' Again the stifled sound was repeated. The brow of the master darkened again—the mother looked agitated; the children's wonder increased; the master closed the book, and the servants, with a constrained silence, retired from the room.

"'What *can* be the matter with old Dennis?' exclaimed the lady, the moment that the door had closed on the household.—'Oh! what *is* amiss with poor old Dennis!' exclaimed the children.

"'Some stupid folly or other,' said the father, morosely. 'Come! away to bed, children. You can learn Dennis's troubles another time.' The children would have lingered, but again the words, 'Away with you!' in a tone which never needed repetition, were decisive: they kissed their parents and withdrew. In a few seconds the father rang the bell. 'Send Dennis Croggan here.'

"The old man appeared. He was a little thin man, of not less than seventy years of age, with white hair and a dark spare countenance. He was one of those nondescript servants in a large Irish house, whose duties are curiously miscellaneous. He had, however, shown sufficient zeal and fidelity through a long life, to secure a warm nook in the servants' hall for the remainder of his days.

"Dennis entered with an humble and timid air, as conscious that he had deeply offended; and had to dread at least a severe rebuke. He bowed profoundly to both the master and mistress.

"'What is the meaning of your interruptions during the prayers, Dennis?' demanded the master abruptly. 'Has any thing happened to you?'

"'No, sir.'

"'Any thing amiss in your son's family?'

"'No, your honour.'

"The interrogator paused; a storm of passion seemed slowly gathering within him. Presently he asked in a loud tone, 'What does this mean? Was there no place to vent your nonsense in, but in this room, and at prayers?'

"Dennis was silent. He cast an imploring look at the master, then at the mistress.

"'What is the matter, good Dennis?' asked the lady, in a kind tone. 'Compose yourself, and tell us. Something strange must have happened to you.'

"Dennis trembled violently; but he advanced a couple of paces, seized the back of a chair as if to support him, and, after a vain gasp or two, declared, as intelligibly as fear would permit, that the prayer had overcome him.

"'Nonsense, man!' exclaimed the master, with fury in the same face, which was so lately beaming with joy on the children. 'Nonsense! Speak out without more ado, or you shall rue it.'

"Dennis looked to the mistress as if he would have implored her intercession; but as she gave no sign of it, he was compelled to speak; but in a brogue that would have been unintelligible to English ears. We therefore translate it:

"'I could not help thinking of the poor people at Rathbeg, when the soldiers and police cried, "Down with them! down with them, even to the ground!" and then the poor bit cabins came down all in fire and smoke, amid the howls and cries of the poor creatures.

"'Oh! it was a fearful sight, your honour—it was, indeed—to see the poor women hugging their babies, and the houses where they were born burning in the wind. It was dreadful to see the old bedridden man lie on the wet ground among the few bits of furniture, and groan to his gracious God above. Oh, your honour! you never saw such a sight, or—you—sure a—it would never have been done!'

"Dennis seemed to let the last words out as if they were jerked from him by a sudden shock.

"The master, whose face had changed during this speech to a livid hue of passion, his eyes blazing with rage, was in the act of rushing on old Dennis, when he was held back by his wife,

who exclaimed, 'Oswald! be calm; let us hear what Dennis has to say. Go on, Dennis, go on.'

"The master stood still, breathing hard to overcome his rage. Old Dennis, as if seeing only his own thoughts, went on: 'O, bless your honour, if you had seen that poor frantic woman when the back of the cabin fell and buried her infant, where she thought she had laid it safe for a moment while she flew to part her husband and a soldier who had struck the other children with the flat of his sword, and bade them to troop off. Oh, your honour, but it was a killing sight. It was that came over me in the prayer, and I feared that we might be praying perdition on us all, when we prayed about our trespasses. If the poor creatures of Rathbeg should meet us, your honour, at Heaven's gate (I was thinking) and say—These are the heathens that would not let us have a poor hearthstone in poor ould Ireland.—And that was all, your honour, that made me misbehave so; I was just thinking of that, and I could not help it.'

"'Begone, you old fool!' exclaimed the master; and Dennis disappeared with a bow and an alertness that would have done credit to his earlier years.

"There was a moment's silence after his exit. The lady turned to her husband, and clasping his arm with her hands and looking into his darkened countenance with a look of tenderest anxiety, said:—

"'Dearest Oswald, let me, as I have so often done, once more entreat that these dreadful evictions may cease. Surely there must be some way to avert them and to set your property right, without such violent measures.'

"The stern proud man said, 'Then why, in the name of Heaven, do you not reveal some other remedy? why do you not enlighten all Ireland? why don't you instruct Government? The unhappy wretches who have been swept away by force are no people, no tenants of mine; they squatted themselves down, as a swarm of locusts fix themselves while a green blade is left; they obstruct all improvement; they will not till the ground themselves, nor will they quit it to allow me to provide more industrious and provident husbandmen to cultivate it. Land that teems

with fertility, and is shut out from bearing and bringing forth food for man, is accursed. Those who have been evicted not only rob me, but their more industrious fellows.'

"'They will murder us,' said the wife, 'some day for these things. They will —'

"Her words were cut short suddenly by her husband starting, and standing in a listening attitude. 'Wait a moment,' he said, with a peculiar calmness, as if he had just got a fresh thought; and his lady, who did not comprehend what was the cause, but hoped that some better influence was touching him, unloosed her hands from his arm. 'Wait just a moment,' he repeated, and stepped from the room, opened the front door, and, without his hat, went out.

"'He is intending to cool down his anger,' thought his wife; 'he feels a longing for the freshness of the air.' But she had not caught the sound which had startled his quicker, because more excited ear; she had been too much engrossed by her own intercession with him; it was a peculiar whine from the mastiff, which was chained near the lodge-gate, that had arrested his attention. He stepped out. The black clouds which overhung the moor had broken, and the moon's light straggled between them.

"The tall and haughty man stood erect in the breeze and listened. Another moment—there was a shot, and he fell headlong upon the broad steps on which he stood. His wife sprang with a piercing shriek from the door and fell on his corpse. A crowd of servants gathered about them, making wild lamentations and breathing vows of vengeance. The murdered master and the wife were borne into the house.

"The heron soared from its lofty perch, and wheeled with terrified wings through the night air. The servants armed themselves, and, rushing furiously from the house, traversed the surrounding masses of trees; fierce dogs were let loose, and dashed frantically through the thickets: all was, however, too late. The soaring heron saw gray figures, with blackened faces, stealing away—often on their hands and knees—down the hollows of the moorlands toward the village, where the two Irish horsemen had,

in the first dusk of that evening, tied their lean steeds to the old elder bush.

"Near the mansion no lurking assassin was to be found. Meanwhile two servants, pistol in hand, on a couple of their master's horses, scoured hill and dale. The heron, sailing solemnly on the wind above, saw them halt in a little town. They thundered with the butt-ends of their pistols on a door in the principal street; over it there was a coffin-shaped board, displaying a painted crown and the big-lettered words, 'POLICE STATION.' The mounted servants shouted with might and main. A night-capped head issued from a chamber casement with—'What is the matter?'

"'Out with you, police! out with all your strength, and lose not a moment. Mr. FitzGibbon, of Sporeen, is shot at his own door.'

"The casement was hastily clapped too, and the two horsemen galloped forward up the long, broad street, now flooded with the moon's light. Heads full of terror were thrust from upper windows to inquire the cause of that rapid galloping, but ever too late. The two men held their course up a steep hill outside of the town, where stood a vast building overlooking the whole place; it was the barracks. Here the alarm was also given.

"In less than an hour a mounted troop of police in olive-green costume, with pistols at holster, sword by side, and carbine on the arm, were trotting briskly out of town, accompanied by the two messengers, whom they plied with eager questions. These answered, and sundry imprecations vented, the whole party increased their speed, and went on, mile after mile, by hedgerow and open moorland, talking as they went.

"Before they reached the house of Sporeen, and near the village where the two Irish horsemen had stopped the evening before, they halted and formed themselves into more orderly array. A narrow gully was before them on the road, hemmed in on each side by rocky steeps, here and there overhung with bushes. The commandant bade them be on their guard, for there might be danger there. He was right; for the moment they began to trot through the pass, the flash and rattle of fire-arms from the thickets above saluted them, followed by a wild yell. In a second,

several of their number lay dead or dying in the road. The fire was returned promptly by the police, but it was at random; for, although another discharge and another howl announced that the enemy were still there, no one could be seen. The head of the police commanded his troops to make a dash through the pass; for there was no scaling the heights from this side, the assailants having warily posted themselves there, because at the foot of the eminence were stretched on either hand impassable bogs. The troop dashed forward, firing their pistols as they went, but were met by such deadly discharges of firearms as threw them into confusion, killed and wounded several of their horses, and made them hastily retreat.

"There was nothing for it but to await the arrival of the cavalry; and it was not long before the clatter of horses' hoofs and the ringing of sabres were heard on the road. On coming up, the troop of cavalry, firing to the right and left on the hillsides, dashed forward, and, in the same instant, cleared the gully in safety, the police having kept their side of the pass. In fact, not a single shot was returned, the arrival of this strong force having warned the insurgents to decamp. The cavalry, in full charge, ascended the hills to their summits. Not a foe was to be seen, except one or two dying men, who were discovered by their groans.

"The moon had been for a time quenched in a dense mass of clouds, which now were blown aside by a keen and cutting wind. The heron, soaring over the desert, could now see gray-coated men flying in different directions to the shelter of the neighbouring hills. The next day he was startled from his dreamy reveries near the moorland stream, by the shouts and galloping of mingled police and soldiers, as they gave chase to a couple of haggard, bare-headed, and panting peasants. These were soon captured, and at once recognised as belonging to the evicted inhabitants of the recently deserted village.

"Since then years have rolled on. The heron, who had been startled from his quiet haunts by these things, was still dwelling on the lofty tree with his kindred, by the hall of Sporeen. He had reared family after family in that airy lodgment, as spring after spring came round; but no family, after that fatal time,

had ever tenanted the mansion. The widow and children had fled from it so soon as Mr. FitzGibbon had been laid in the grave. The nettle and dock flourished over the scorched ruins of the village of Rathbeg; dank moss and wild grass tangled the proud drives and walks of Sporeen. All the woodland rides and pleasure-grounds lay obstructed with briers; and young trees in time grew luxuriantly where once the roller in its rounds could not crush a weed; the nimble frolics of the squirrel were now the only merry things where formerly the feet of lovely children had sprung with elastic joy.

"The curse of Ireland was on the place. Landlord and tenant, gentleman and peasant, each with the roots and the shoots of many virtues in their hearts, thrown into a false position by the mutual injuries of ages, had wreaked on each other the miseries sown broadcast by their ancestors. Beneath this foul spell men who would, in any other circumstances, have been the happiest and the noblest of mankind, became tyrants; and peasants, who would have glowed with grateful affection toward them, exulted in being their assassins. As the traveller rode past the decaying hall, the gloomy woods, and waste black moorlands of Sporeen, he read the riddle of Ireland's fate, and asked himself when an Œdipus would arise to solve it."

A large number of the peasantry of Connemara, a rocky and romantic region, are among the most recent evictions.

"These hardy mountaineers, whose lives, and the lives of their fathers and great-grandfathers have been spent in reclaiming the barren hills where their hard lot has been cast, were the victims of a series of oppressions unparalleled in the annals of Irish misrule. They were thickly planted over the rocky surface of Connemara for political purposes. In the days of the 40*s.* freeholder, they were driven to the hustings like a flock of sheep, to register not alone one vote, but in many instances three or four votes each; and it was no uncommon thing to see those unfortunate serfs evicted from their holdings when an election had terminated—

not that they refused to vote according to the wish of their landlords, but because they did not go far enough in the sin of perjury and the diabolical crime of impersonation. When they ceased to possess any political importance, they were cast away like broken tools. It was no uncommon thing, in the wilds of Connemara, to see the peasantry, after an election, coming before the Catholic Archbishop, when holding a visitation of his diocese, to proclaim openly the crime of impersonation which their landlords compelled them to commit, and implore forgiveness for such. Of this fact we have in the town of Galway more than one living witness; so that, while every thing was done, with few exceptions, to demoralize the peasantry of Connemara, and plant in their souls the germs of that slavery which is so destructive to the growth of industry, enterprise, or manly exertion—no compassion for their wants was ever evinced—no allowance for their poverty and inability to meet the rack-renting demands of their landlords was ever made."

Perhaps, it requires no Œdipus to tell what will be the future of the Irish nation, if the present system of slavery is maintained by their English conquerors. If they do not cease to exist as a people, they will continue to quaff the dark waters of sorrow, and to pay a price, terrible to think of, for the mere privilege of existence.

During the famine of 1847, the heartlessness of many Irish landlords was manifested by their utter indifference to the multitudes starving around their well-supplied mansions. At that period, the Rev. A. King, of Cork, wrote to the Southern Reporter as follows:—

"The town and the surrounding country for many miles are possessed by twenty-six proprietors, whose respective yearly in-

comes vary from one hundred pounds, or less, to several thousands. They had all been respectfully informed of the miserable condition of the people, and solicited to give relief. Seventeen of the number had not the politeness to answer the letters of the committee, four had written to say they would not contribute, and the remaining five had given a miserable fraction of what they ought to have contributed. My first donation from a small portion of a small relief fund, received from English strangers, exceeded the aggregate contributions of six-and-twenty landed proprietors, on whose properties human beings were perishing from famine, filth, and disease, amid circumstances of wretchedness appalling to humanity and disgraceful to civilized men! I believe it my sacred duty to gibbet this atrocity in the press, and to call on benevolent persons to loathe it as a monster crime. Twenty-one owners of property, on which scores, nay hundreds, of their fellow-creatures are dying of hunger, give nothing to save their lives! Are they not virtually guilty of wholesale murder? I ask not what human law may decide upon their acts, but in the name of Christianity I arraign them as guilty of treason against the rights of humanity and the laws of God!"

It is to escape the responsibility mentioned by Mr. King, as well as to avoid the payment of poor-rates, that the landlords resort to the desolating process of eviction. To show the destructive nature of the tyrannical system that has so long prevailed in Ireland, we will take an abstract of the census of 1841 and 1851.

| | | 1841. | | 1851. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Houses: | Inhabited | 1,328,839 | | 1,047,935 |
| " | Uninhabited, built | 52,203 | | 65,159 |
| " | " building | 3,318 | | 2,113 |
| | Total | 1,384,360 | | 1,115,207 |
| Families | | 1,472,287 | | 1,207,002 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Persons: Males | 4,019,576 | | 3,176,727 |
| " Females | 4,155,548 | | 3,339,067 |
| Total | 8,175,124 | | 6,515,794 |
| Population in 1841 | 8,175,124 | | |
| " 1851 | 6,515,794 | | |
| Decrease | 1,659,330 | | |

Or, at the rate of 20 per cent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Population in 1821 | 6,801,827 |
| " 1831 | 7,767,401 |
| " 1841 | 8,175,124 |
| " 1851 | 6,515,794 |

Or, 286,030 souls fewer than in 1821, thirty years ago.

"We shall impress the disastrous importance of the reduction in the number of the people on our readers, by placing before them a brief account of the previous progress of the population. There is good reason to suppose, that, prior to the middle of the last century, the people continually, though slowly, increased; but from that time something like authentic but imperfect records give the following as their numbers at successive periods:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1754 | 2,372,634 | | |
| 1767 | 2,544,276 | Increase per cent. | 7·2 |
| 1777 | 2,690,556 | " | 5·7 |
| 1785 | 2,845,932 | " | 5·8 |
| 1805 | 5,359,456 | " | 84·0 |
| 1813 | 5,937,858 | " | 10·8 |
| 1821 | 6,801,829 | " | 14·6 |
| 1831 | 7,767,401 | " | 14·9 |
| 1841 | 8,175,124 | " | 5·3 |
| 1851 | 6,515,794 | Decrease | 20·0 |

"Though there are some discrepancies in these figures, and probably the number assigned to 1785 is too small, and that assigned to 1805 too large; they testify uniformly to a continual increase of the people for eighty-seven years, from 1754 to 1841. Now, for the first time in nearly a century, a complete change has set in, and the population has decreased in the last ten years 20 per cent. It is 1,659,330 less than in 1841, and less by 286,033 than in 1821.

"But this is not quite all. The census of 1851 was taken 68 days earlier than the census of 1841; and it is obvious, if the same rate of decrease continued through those 68 days, as has prevailed on the average through the ten years, that the whole amount of decrease would be so much greater. Sixty-eight days is about the 54th part of ten years—say the 50th part; and the 50th part of the deficiency is 33,000 odd—say 30,000. We must add 30,000, therefore, to the 1,659,330, making 1,689,330, to get the true amount of the diminution of the people in ten years.

"Instead of the population increasing in a healthy manner, implying an increase in marriages, in families, and in all the affections connected with them, and implying an increase in general prosperity, as for nearly a century before, and now amounting, as we might expect, to 8,600,000, it is 2,000,000 less. This is a disastrous change in the life of the Irish. At this downward rate, decreasing 20 per cent. in ten years, five such periods would suffice to exterminate the whole population more effectually than the Indians have been exterminated from North America. Fifty years of this new career would annihilate the whole population of Ireland, and turn the land into an uninhabited waste. This is a terrible reverse in the condition of a people, and is the more remarkable because in the same period the population of Great Britain has increased 12 per cent., and because there is no other example of a similar decay in any part of Europe in the same time, throughout which the population has continued to increase, though not everywhere equally, nor so fast as in Great Britain. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the annals of mankind can supply, in a season of peace—when no earthquakes have toppled down cities, no volcanoes have buried them beneath their ashes, and no inroads of the ocean have occurred—such wholesale diminution of the population and desolation of the country.

"The inhabited houses in Ireland have decreased from 1,328,839 in 1841 to 1,047,735 in 1851, or 281,104, (21·2 per cent.,) and consequently more than the population, who are now worse lodged and more crowded in relation to houses than they were in 1841. As the uninhabited houses have increased only 12,951, no less than 268,153 houses must have been destroyed in the ten years.

That informs us of the extent of the 'clearances' of which we have heard so much of late; and the 1,659,300 people less in the country is an index to the number of human beings who inhabited the houses destroyed. We must remember, too, that within the period a number of union workhouses have been built in Ireland, capable of accommodating 308,885 persons, and that, besides the actual diminution of the number of the people, there has been a change in their habits, about 300,000 having become denizens of workhouses, who, prior to 1841, lived in their own separate huts. With distress and destruction pauperism has also increased.

"The decrease has not been equal for the males and females; the numbers were as follows:—

| | 1841. | 1851. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Males..... | 4,019,576 ... | 3,176,124 | Decrease 20·9 per cent. |
| Females..... | 4,155,548 ... | 3,336,067 | " 29·6 " |

"The females now exceed the males by 162,943, or 2 per cent. on the whole population. It is not, however, that the mortality has been greater among the males than the females, but that more of the former than of the latter have escaped from the desolation.

"Another important feature of the returns is the increase of the town population:—Dublin, 22,124, or 9 per cent.; Belfast, 24,352, or 32 per cent.; Galway, 7422, or 43 per cent.; Cork, 5765, or 7 per cent. Altogether, the town population has increased 71,928, or nearly 1 per cent., every town except Londonderry displaying the same feature; and that increase makes the decrease of the rural population still more striking. The whole decrease is of the agricultural classes: Mr. O'Connell's 'finest pisantry' are the sufferers."

The London Illustrated News, in an article upon the census, says—

"The causes of the decay of the people, subordinate to inefficient employment and to wanting commerce and manufactures, are obviously great mortality, caused by the destruction of the potatoes and the consequent want of food, the clearance system, and emigration. From the retarded increase of the population

between 1831 and 1841—only 5.3 per cent., while in the previous ten years it had been nearly 15 per cent.—it may be inferred that the growth of the population was coming to a stand-still before 1841, and that the late calamities only brought it down to its means of continued subsistence, according to the distribution of property and the occupations of the people. The potato rot, in 1846, was a somewhat severer loss of that root than had before fallen on the Irish, who have suffered occasionally from famines ever since their history began; and it fell so heavily on them then, because they were previously very much and very generally impoverished. Thousands, and even millions, of them subsisted almost exclusively on lumpers, the very worst kind of potatoes, and were reduced in health and strength when they were overtaken by the dearth of 1846. The general smallness of their consumption, and total abstinence from the use of tax-paying articles, is made painfully apparent by the decrease of the population of Ireland having had no sensible influence in reducing the revenue. They were half starved while alive. Another remarkable fact which we must notice is, that, while the Irish population have thus been going to decay, the imports and exports of the empire have increased in a much more rapid ratio than the population of Great Britain. For them, therefore, exclusively, is the trade of the empire carried on, and the Irish who have been swept away, without lessening the imports and exports, have had no share in our commerce. It is from these facts apparent, that, while they have gone to decay, the population of Great Britain have increased their well-being and their enjoyments much more than their numbers. We need not remind our readers of the dreadful sufferings of the Irish in the years 1847, 1848, and 1849; for the accounts we then published of them were too melancholy to be forgotten. As an illustration, we may observe that the Irish Poor-law Commissioners, in their fourth report, dated May 5, 1851, boast that the 'worst evils of the famine, such as the occurrence of *deaths by the wayside*, a high rate of mortality in the workhouses, and the prevalence of dangerous and contagious diseases in or out of the workhouse, have undergone a very material abatement.' There have been, then, numerous deaths by

the wayside, alarming contagious diseases, and great mortality in the workhouses."

The Poor-law Commissioners kept a most mysterious silence during the worst period of the famine; and, it was only when the horrors of that time were known to the whole civilized world that they reported the "abatement of the evils." Perhaps, they had become so accustomed to witnessing misery in Ireland that even the famine years did not startle them into making a humane appeal to the British government upon behalf of the sufferers.

The Illustrated News, in the same article we have quoted above, says, quite sensibly, but with scarcely a due appreciation of the causes of Ireland's decay—

"The decline of the population has been greatest in Connaught; now the Commissioners tell us that in 1847 the maximum rate of mortality in the workhouses of that province was 43.6 per week in a thousand persons, so that in about 23 weeks at this rate the whole 1000 would be dead. The maximum rate of mortality in all the workhouses in that year was 25 per 1000 weekly, or the whole 1000 would die in something more than 39 weeks. That was surely a very frightful mortality. It took place among that part of the population for which room was found in the workhouses; and among the population out of the workhouses perishing by the wayside, the mortality must have been still more frightful. We are happy to believe, on the assurance of the commissioners, that matters are now improved, that workhouse accommodation is to be had—with one exception, Kilrush—for all who need it; that the expense of keeping the poor is diminished; that contagious disorders are less frequent, and that the rate of mortality has much declined. But the statement that such im-

provements have taken place, implies the greatness of the past sufferings. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the decay of the population has partly arisen from increased mortality on the one hand, and from decreasing marriages and decreasing births on the other. Now that the Irish have a poor-law fairly administered, we may expect that, in future, such terrible scenes as were witnessed in 1847–49 will not again occur. But the state which authorized the landlords, by a law, to clear their estates of the peasantry, as if they were vermin, destroying, as we have seen, 268,153 dwellings, without having previously imposed on those landlords the obligation of providing for the people, did a great wrong, and the decay of the people now testifies against it.

"With reference to emigration—the least objectionable mode of getting rid of a population—there are no correct returns kept of the number of Irish who emigrate, because a great part of them go from Liverpool, and are set down in the returns as emigrants from England. It is supposed by those best acquainted with the subject, that more than nine-tenths of the emigrants from Liverpool are Irish. Taking that proportion, therefore, and adding it to the emigrants who proceed direct from Ireland, the number of Irish emigrants from 1842 to the present year was—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1843 | 39,549 | 1847 | 214,970 |
| 1844 | 55,910 | 1848 | 177,720 |
| 1845 | 76,523 | 1849 | 208,759 |
| 1846 | 106,767 | 1850 | 207,853 |
| Total, 4 years, | 278,749 | Total, 4 years, | 809,302 |

Total, 8 years ..... 1,088,051.

"If we add 70,000 for the two first years of the decennial period not included in the return, we shall have 1,158,051 as the total emigration of the ten years. It was probably more than that—it could not well have been less. To this we must add the number of Irish who came to England and Scotland, of whom no account is kept. If we put them down at 30,000 a year, we shall have for the ten years 300,000; or the total expatriation of the Irish in the ten years may be assumed at 1,458,000, or say 1,500,000. At

first sight this appears a somewhat soothing explanation of the decline of the Irish population; but, on being closely examined, it diminishes the evil very little in one sense, and threatens to enhance it in another.

"So far as national strength is concerned, it is of no consequence whether the population die out or emigrate to another state, except that, if the other state be a rival or an enemy, it may be worse for the parent state that the population emigrate than be annihilated. In truth, the Irish population in the United States, driven away formerly by persecution, have imbittered the feelings of the public there against England. Emigration is only very beneficial, therefore, when it makes room for one at home for every one removed. Such is the emigration from England to her colonies or to the United States, with which she has intimate trade relations; but such is not the case with the emigration from Ireland, for there we find a frightful void. No one fills the emigrant's place. He flies from the country because he cannot live in it; and being comparatively energetic, we may infer that few others can. In the ordinary course, had the 1,500,000 expatriated people remained, nearly one-third of them would have died in the ten years; they would have increased the terrible mortality, and, without much adding to the present number of the people, would have added to the long black catalogue of death.

"For the emigrants themselves removal is a great evil, a mere flying from destruction. The Poor-law Commissioners state that the number of pauper emigrants sent from Ireland in 1850 was about 1800, or less than one per cent. of the whole emigration; the bulk of the emigrants were not paupers, but persons of some means as well as of some energy. They were among the best of the population, and they carried off capital with them—leaving the decrepit, the worn-out, and the feeble behind them; the mature and the vigorous, the seed of future generations, went out of the land, and took with them the means of future increase. We doubt, therefore, whether such an emigration as that from Ireland within the last four years will not be more fatal to its future prosperity than had the emigrants swelled the mortality at

home. All the circumstances now enumerated tend to establish the conclusion, that, for the state, and for the people who remain behind, it is of very little consequence whether a loss of population, such as that in Ireland, be caused by an excessive mortality or excessive emigration.

"To the emigrants themselves, after they have braved the pain of the separation and the difficulties of the voyage, and after they are established in a better home, the difference is very great; but it may happen that, to Ireland as a state, their success abroad will be rather dangerous than beneficial. On the whole, emigration does not account for the decrease of people; and if it did account for it, would not afford us the least consolation."

In the above article, the Kilrush Union is mentioned as an exception to the general improvement in Ireland, in respect to workhouse accommodation. Mr. Sidney Godolphin Osborne, the able and humane correspondent of the London Times, can enlighten us in regard to the treatment of the poor of Kilrush in 1851.

"I am sorry to be compelled again to call public attention to the state of things in the above ill-fated union. I do not dispute the interest which must attach to the transactions of the Encumbered Estates Court, the question of the so-called Godless Colleges, the campaign now commencing against the national schools, and the storm very naturally arising against the Papal Aggression Bill, in a country so Catholic as Ireland. But I must claim some interest upon the part of the British public on the question of life and death now cruelly working out in the West of Ireland.

"The accommodation for paupers in the Kilrush union-houses was, in the three weeks ending the 8th, 15th, and 22d of this month, calculated for 4654; in the week ending the 8th of March there were 5005 inmates, 56 deaths!—in the week ending the 15th of March, 4980 inmates, 68 deaths!—in the week ending the

22d of March, 4868 inmates, 79 deaths! That is to say, *there were* 203 *deaths in* 21 *days*. I last week called your attention to the fact of the overcrowding and the improper feeding of the poor creatures in these houses, as proved by a report made by the medical officer on the 1st of February, repeated on the 22d, and, at the time of my letter, evidently unheeded. Behold the result—79 deaths in a population of under 5000 in one week! I have, I regret to say, besides these returns, a large mass of returns of deaths outside the house, evidently the result of starvation; on some, coroners' juries have admitted it to be so.

"Eye-witnesses of the highest respectability, as well as my own paid agent, report to me the state of the town and neighbourhood of the workhouse on the admission-days in characters quite horrifying: between 100 and 200 poor, half-starved, almost naked creatures may be seen by the roadside, under the market-house—in short, wherever the famished, the houseless, and the cold can get for a night's shelter. Many have come twelve Irish miles to seek relief, and then have been refused, though their sunken eyes and projecting bones write the words 'destitute' and 'starving' in language even the most callous believers in pauper cunning could not misunderstand. I will defy contradiction to the fact, that the business of the admission-days is conducted in a way which forbids common justice to the applicants; it is a mere mockery to call the scene of indecent hurry and noisy strife between guardians, officers, and paupers, which occupies the few hours weekly given to this work, a hearing of applicants.

"I have before me some particulars of a visit of inspection paid to these houses a short time since by a gentleman whose position and whose motives are above all cavil for respectability and integrity; I have a mass of evidence, voluntarily given me, from sources on which I can place implicit confidence, all tending to one and the same point. The mortality so fast increasing can only be ascribed to the insufficiency of the out-relief given to the destitute, and the crowding and improper diet of the in-door paupers. From the published statement of the half-year ending September 29, 1850, signed 'C. M. Vandeleur, chairman,' I find there were 1014 deaths in that said half-year. Average weekly

cost per head—food, 11¼*d.*; clothing, 2*d.* I shall look with anxiety for the return of the half-year just ended; it will be a curious document, as emanating from a board the chairman of which has just trumpeted in your columns with regard to this union, 'that the lands, with little exception, are well occupied, and a spirit of industry visible among all classes.' It will at least prove a more than usual occupation of burying-land, and a spirit of increased energy in the grave-digging class.

"With regard to the diet of the old and infirm, I can conceive it possible that since the publication of my last letter there may be some improvement, though I am not yet aware of it. I am now prepared to challenge all contradiction to the fact that the diet has been not only short of what it ought to be by the prescribed dietary, but, in the case of the bread, it has frequently been unfit for human food—such as very old or very young people could only touch under the pressure of famine, and could not, under any circumstances, sustain health upon.

"Let the authorities investigate the deaths of the last six weeks, taking the cause of death from the medical officers, and how soon after admission each individual died; they will then, with me, cease to wonder that the poor creatures who come in starving should so soon sink, when the sanatory condition of the law's asylum is just that which would tell most severely even on the most healthy. I admit, sir, that Kilrush market may be well supplied with cheap food, but the evicted peasantry have no money, and vendors do not give. I admit that the season for the growth of nettles, and cornkale, and other weeds, the of late years normal food of these poor creatures, has not yet set in, and this I do not deny is all against them. I leave to the British public the forming any conclusion they like from this admission.

"What I now contend for is this—that in a particular part of Great Britain there are certain workhouses, asylums for the destitute, supervised by salaried inspectors, directly under the cognizance of the Government, in which the crowding of the sick is most shameful, the diet equally so. The mortality for the weeks ending January 25 to March 22—484, upon a population which in those weeks never exceeded 5200 souls! I believe these to be

facts which cannot be disputed, and I claim on them the immediate interference of the Government, and the more especially as the chairman of this union makes a public favourable comparison between it and the union of Ennistymon, in the same county. I am myself prepared, on very short notice, to go over at my own expense with any person of respectability from this country, appointed by Government, and I have no doubt we shall prove that I have, if any thing, understated matters; if so, am I wrong, sir, in saying, that such a state of things, within a twenty hours' journey from London, is in a sad and shameful contrast to the expected doings of the 'World's Fair' on English ground? *When, the other day, I looked on the Crystal Palace, and thought of Kilrush workhouse, as I have seen it and now know it to be, I confess I felt, as a Christian and the subject of a Christian Government, utter disgust.* Again, sir, I thank you from my heart for your indulgence to these my cries for justice for Ireland."

Alas! poor country, where each hour teems with a new grievance; where tyranny is so much a custom that the very institutions which have charity written upon their front are turned to dangerous pest-houses, slaving shops, or tombs; where to toil even to extremity is to be rewarded with semi-starvation in styes, and, perhaps, by sudden eviction, and a grave by the wayside; where to entertain certain religious convictions is to invite the whips of persecution, and the particular tyranny of the landlord who adheres to the Church of England; where to speak the faith of the heart, the opinions of the mind, is to sacrifice the food doled out by the serf-holders; where to live is to be considered a glorious mercy—to hope, something unfit for common men.

The struggles and achievements of Con McNale, as related in "Household Words," give us a tolerably truthful representation of the milder features of Irish peasant life. Con had better luck than most of his class, and knew better how to improve it. Yet the circumstances of his existence were certainly not those of a freeman:—

"My father," said he, "lived under ould Squire Kilkelly, an' for awhile tinded his cattle; but the Squire's gone out iv this part iv the counthry, to Australia or some furrin part, an' the mentioned house (mansion-house) an' the fine property was sould, so it was, for little or nothin', for the fightin' was over in furrin parts; Boney was put down, an' there was no price for corn or cattle, an' a jontleman from Scotland came an' bought the istate. We were warned by the new man to go, for he tuk in his own hand all the in-land about the domain, bein' a grate farmer. He put nobody in our little place, but pulled it down, an' he guv father a five-guinea note, but my father was ould an' not able to face the world agin, an' he went to the town an' tuk a room—a poor, dirty, choky place it was for him, myself, and sisther to live in. The neighbours were very kind an' good though. Sister Bridget got a place wid a farmer hereabouts, an' I tuk the world on my own showlders. I had nothin' at all but the rags I stud up in, an' they were bad enuf. Poor Biddy got a shillin' advanced iv her wages that her masther was to giv her. She guv it me, for I was bent on goin' toward Belfast to look for work. All along the road I axed at every place; they could giv it me, but to no good; except when I axed, they'd giv me a bowl iv broth, or a piece iv bacon, or an oaten bannock, so that I had my shillin' to the fore when I got to Belfast.

"Here the heart was near lavin' me all out intirely. I went wandtherin' down to the quay among the ships, and what should there be but a ship goin' to Scotland that very night wid pigs. In throth it was fun to see the sailors at cross-purposes wid 'em,

for they didn't know the natur iv the bastes. I did. I knew how to coax 'em. I set to an' I deludhered an' coaxed the pigs, an' by pullin' them by the tail, knowing that if they took a fancy I wished to pull 'em back out of the ship they'd run might an' main into her, and so they did. Well, the sailors were mightily divarted, an' when the pigs was aboord I wint down to the place; an' the short iv it is that in three days I was in Glasgow town, an' the captain an' the sailors subschribed up tin shillins an' guv it into my hand. Well, I bought a raping-hook, an' away I trudged till I got quite an' clane into the counthry, an' the corn was here and there fit to cut. At last I goes an' ax a farmer for work. He thought I was too wake to be paid by the day, but one field havin' one corner fit to cut, an' the next not ready, 'Paddy,' says he, 'you may begin in that corner, an' I'll pay yees by the work yees do,' an' he guv me my breakfast an' a pint of beer. Well, I never quit that masther the whole harvest, an' when the raping was over I had four goolden guineas to carry home, besides that I was as sthrong as a lion. Yees would wonder how glad the sailors was to see me back agin, an' ne'er a farthin' would they take back iv their money, but tuk me over agin to Belfast, givin' me the hoighth of good thratemint of all kinds. I did not stay an hour in Belfast, but tuk to the road to look afther the ould man an' little Biddy. Well, sorrows the tidins I got. The ould man had died, an' the grief an' disthress of poor little Biddy had even touched her head a little. The dacent people where she was, may the Lord reward 'em, though they found little use in her, kep her, hoping I would be able to come home an' keep her myself, an' so I was. I brought her away wid me, an' the sight iv me put new life in her. I was set upon not being idle, an' I'll tell yees what I did next.

"When I was little *bouchaleen* iv a boy I used to be ahead on the mountain face, an' 'twas often I sheltered myself behind them gray rocks that's at the gable iv my house; an' somehow it came into my head that the new Squire, being a grate man for improvin' might let me try to brake in a bit iv land there; an' so I goes off to him, an' one iv the sarvints bein' a sort iv cousin iv mine, I got to spake to the Squire, an' behould yees he guv me lave at

onst. Well, there's no time like the prisint, an' as I passed out iv the back yard of the mentioned (mansion) house, I sees the sawyers cutting some Norway firs that had been blown down by [illegible] an' I tells the sawyers that I had got lave to brake in [illegible] and in the mountains, an' what would some pieces iv fir [illegible]t. They says they must see what kind of pieces they was that I wished for; an' no sooner had I set about looking 'em through than the Squire himself comes ridin' out of the stable-yard, an' says he at onst, 'McNale,' says he, 'you may have a load iv cuttins to build your cabin, or two if you need it.' 'The Heavens be your honour's bed,' says I, an' I wint off to the room where I an' Biddy lived, not knowin' if I was on my head or my heels. Next day, before sunrise, I was up here, five miles up the face of Slieve-dan, with a spade in my fist, an' I looked roun' for the most shiltered spot I could sit my eyes an. Here I saw, where the house an' yard are stan'in', a plot iv about an acre to the south iv that tall ridge of rocks, well sheltered from the blast from the north an' from the aste, an' it was about sunrise an' a fine morning in October that I tuk up the first spadeful. There was a spring then drippin' down the face iv the rocks, an' I saw at once that it would make the cabin completely damp, an' the land about mighty sour an' water-*slain;* so I determined to do what I saw done in Scotland. I sunk a deep drain right under the rock to run all along the back iv the cabin, an' workin' that day all alone by myself, I did a grate dale iv it. At night it was close upon dark when I started to go home, so I hid my spade in the heath an' trudged off. The next morning I bargained with a farmer to bring me up a load iv fir cuttins from the Squire's, an' by the ovenin' they were thrown down within a quarter iv a mile iv my place, for there was no road to it then, an' I had to carry 'em myself for the remainder of the way. This occupied me till near nightfall; but I remained that night till I placed two upright posts of fir, one at each corner iv the front iv the cabin.

"I was determined to get the cabin finished as quickly as possible, that I might be able to live upon the spot, for much time was lost in goin' and comin'. The next day I was up betimes, an' finding a track iv stiff blue clay, I cut a multitude of thick

square sods iv it, an' having set up two more posts at the remainin' two corners iv the cabin, I laid four rows iv one gable, rising it about three feet high. Havin' laid the rows, I sharpind three or four straight pine branches, an' druv them down through the sods into the earth, to pin the wall in its place. Next day I had a whole gable up, each three rows iv sods pinned through to the three benathe. In about eight days I had put up the four walls, makin' a door an' two windows; an' now my outlay began, for I had to pay a thatcher to put on the sthraw an' to assist me in risin' the rafthers. In another week it was covered in, an' it was a pride to see it with the new thatch an' a wicker chimbly daubed with clay, like a pallis undernathe the rock. I now got some turf that those who had cut 'em had not removed, an' they sould 'em for a thrifle, an' I made a grate fire an' slept on the flure of my own house that night. Next day I got another load iv fir brought to make the partitions in the winter, an' in a day or two after I had got the inside so dhry that I was able to bring poor Biddy to live there for good and all. The Heavens be praised, there was not a shower iv rain fell from the time I began the cabin till I ended it, an' when the rain did fall, not a drop came through—all was carried off by my dhrain into the little river before yees.

"The moment I was settled in the house I comminced dhraining about an acre iv bog in front, an' the very first winter I sowed a shillin's worth of cabbidge seed, an' sold in the spring a pound's worth of little cabbidge plants for the gardins in the town below. When spring came, noticin' how the early-planted praties did the best, I planted my cabbidge ground with praties, an' I had a noble crap, while the ground was next year fit for the corn. In the mane time, every winther I tuk in more and more ground, an' in summer I cut my turf for fewel, where the cuttins could answer in winther for a dhrain; an' findin' how good the turf were, I got a little powney an' carried 'em to the town to sell, when I was able to buy lime in exchange an' put it on my bog, so as to make it produce double. As things went on I got assistance, an' when I marrid, my wife had two cows that guv me a grate lift.

"I was always thought to be a handy boy, an' I could do a turn of mason-work with any man not riglarly bred to it; so I took one of my loads of lime, an' instead of puttin' it on the land, I made it into morthar—and indeed the stones being no ways scarce, I set to an' built a little kiln, like as I had seen down the counthry. I could then burn my own lime, an' the limestone were near to my hand, too many iv 'em. While all this was goin' on, I had riz an' sould a good dale iv oats and praties, an' every summer I found ready sale for my turf in the town from one jontleman that I always charged at an even rate, year by year. I got the help of a stout boy, a cousin iv my own, who was glad iv a shilter; an' when the childher were ould enough, I got some young cattle that could graze upon the mountain in places where no other use could be made iv the land, and set the gossoons to herd 'em.

"There was one bit iv ground nigh han' to the cabin that puzzled me intirely. It was very poor and sandy, an' little better than a rabbit burrow; an' telling the Squire's Scotch steward iv it, he bade me thry some flax; an' sure enuf, so I did, an' a fine crap iv flax I had as you might wish to see; an' the stame-mills being beginnin' in the counthry at that time, I sould my flax for a very good price, my wife having dhried it, beetled it, an' scutched it with her own two hands.

"I should have said before that the Squire himself came up here with a lot iv fine ladies and jontlemen to see what I had done; an' you never in your life seed a man so well plased as he was, an' a mimber of Parlimint from Scotland was with him, an' he tould me I was a credit to ould Ireland; an' sure didn't Father Connor read upon the papers, how he tould the whole story in the Parlimint house before all the lords an' quality. But faix, he didn't forgit me; for a month or two after he was here, an' it coming on the winter, comes word for me an' the powney to go down to the mentioned (mansion) house, for the steward wanted me. So away I wint, an' there, shure enuf, was an illigant Scotch plough, every inch of iron, an' a lot of young Norroway pines—the same you see shiltering the house an' yard—an' all was a free prisint for me from the Scotch jontleman that was the mimber

of Parlimint. 'Twas that plough that did the meracles iv work hereabouts; for I often lint it to any that I knew to be a careful hand, an' it was the manes iv havin' the farmers all round send an' buy 'em. At last I was able to build a brave snug house; and, praised be Providence, I have never had an hour's ill health nor a moment's grief, but when poor Biddy, the cratur, died from us. It is thirty years since that morning that I tuk up the first spadeful from the wild mountain side; an' twelve acres are good labour land, an' fifteen drained an' good grazin'. I have been payin' rint twinty years, an' am still, thank God, able to take my own part iv any day's work—plough, spade, or flail."

"Have you got a lease?" said I.

"No, indeed, nor a schrape of a pin; nor I never axed it. Have I not my *tinnant-rite*?"

At any moment the labours of poor Con might have been rendered of no benefit to him. He held the wretched hovel and the ground he tilled merely by the permission of the landlord, who could have desolated all by the common process of eviction; and Con would then have been driven to new exertions or to the workhouse. The rugged ballad of "Patrick Fitzpatrick's Farewell," presents a case more common than that of Con McNale:—

"Those three long years I've labour'd hard as any on Erin's isle,
And still was scarcely able my family to keep;
My tender wife and children three, under the lash of misery,
Unknown to friends and neighbours, I've often seen to weep.
Sad grief it seized her tender heart, when forced her only cow to part,
And canted* was before her face, the poor-rates for to pay;

* Auctioned.

Cut down in all her youthful bloom, she's gone into her silent tomb;
Forlorn I will mourn her loss when in America."

In the same ballad we have an expression of the comparative paradise the Irish expect to find—and do find, by the way—in that land which excites so much the pity of the philanthropic aristocracy:—

"Let Erin's sons and daughters fair now for the promised land prepare,
America, that beauteous soil, will soon your toil repay;
*Employment, it is plenty there, on beef and mutton you can fare,*
*From five to six dollars is your wages every day.*
Now see what money has come o'er these three years from Columbia's shore;
But for it numbers now were laid all in their silent clay;
California's golden mines, my boys, are open now to crown our joys,
So all our hardships we'll dispute when in America."

As an illustration of the manner in which eviction is sometimes effected by heartless landlords in Ireland, and the treatment which the lowly of Great Britain generally receive from those who become their masters, we may quote "Two Scenes in the Life of John Bodger," from "Dickens's Household Words." The characters in this sketch are English; but the incidents are such as frequently occur in Ireland:—

"In the year 1832, on the 24th of December, one of those clear bright days that sometimes supersede the regular snowy, sleety Christmas weather, a large ship lay off Plymouth; the Blue Peter flying from her masthead, quarters of beef hanging from her mis-

sen-booms, and strings of cabbages from her stern rails; her decks crowded with coarsely-clad blue-nosed passengers, and lumbered with boxes, barrels, hen-coops, spars, and chain-cables. The wind was rising with a hollow, dreary sound. Boats were hurrying to and fro, between the vessel and the beach, where stood excited groups of old people and young children. The hoarse, impatient voices of officers issuing their commands, were mingled with the shrill wailing of women on the deck and the shore.

"It was the emigrant ship 'Cassandra,' bound for Australia during the period of the 'Bounty' system, when emigration recruiters, stimulated by patriotism and a handsome percentage, rushed frantically up and down the country, earnestly entreating 'healthy married couples,' and single souls of either sex, to accept a free passage to 'a land of plenty.' The English labourers had not then discovered that Australia was a country where masters were many and servants scarce. In spite of poverty and poorhouse fare, few of the John Bull family could be induced to give heed to flaming placards they could not read, or inspiring harangues they could not understand. The admirable education which in 1832, at intervals of seven days, was distributed in homœopathic doses among the agricultural olive-branches of England, did not include modern geography, even when reading and writing were imparted. If a stray Sunday-school scholar did acquire a faint notion of the locality of Canaan, he was never permitted to travel as far as the British Colonies.

"To the ploughman out of employ, Canaan, Canada, and Australia were all '*furrin parts;*' he did not know the way to them; but he knew the way to the poorhouse, so took care to keep within reach of it.

"Thus it came to pass that the charterers of the good ship 'Cassandra' were grievously out in their calculations; and failing to fill with English, were obliged to make up their complement with Irish; who, having nothing to fall upon, but the charity of the poor to the poorer, are always ready to go anywhere for a daily meal.

"The steamers from Cork had transferred their ragged, weeping, laughing, fighting cargoes; the last stray groups of English had been collected from the western counties; the Government officers

had cleared and passed the ship. With the afternoon tide two hundred helpless, ignorant, destitute souls were to bid farewell to their native land. The delays consequent on miscalculating the emigrating taste of England had retarded until midwinter, a voyage which should have been commenced in autumn.

"In one of the shore-boats, sat a portly man—evidently neither an emigrant nor a sailor—wrapped in a great coat and comforters; his broad-brimmed beaver secured from the freezing blast by a coloured bandanna tied under the chin of a fat, whiskerless face. This portly personage was Mr. Joseph Lobbit, proprietor of 'The Shop,' farmer, miller, and chairman of the vestry of the rich rural parish of Duxmoor.

"At Duxmoor, the chief estate was in Chancery, the manor-house in ruins, the lord of it an outlaw, and the other landed proprietors absentees, or in debt; a curate preached, buried, married, and baptized, for the health of the rector compelled him to pass the summer in Switzerland, and the winter in Italy; so Mr. Lobbit was almost the greatest, as he was certainly the richest, man in the parish.

"Except that he did not care for any one but himself, and did not respect any one who had not plenty of money, he was not a bad sort of man. He had a jolly hearty way of talking and shaking hands, and slapping people on the back; and until you began to count money with him, he seemed a very pleasant, liberal fellow. He was fond of money, but more fond of importance; and therefore worked as zealously at parish-business as he did at his own farm, shop, and mill. He centred the whole powers of the vestry in one person, and would have been beadle, too, if it had been possible. He appointed the master and matron of the workhouse, who were relations of his wife; supplied all the rations and clothing for 'the house,' and fixed the prices in full vestry (viz. himself, and the clerk, his cousin,) assembled. He settled all the questions of out-door relief, and tried hard, more than once, to settle the rate of wages too.

"Ill-natured people did say that those who would not work on Master Lobbit's farm, at *his* wages, stood a very bad chance if they wanted any thing from the parish, or came for the doles of blankets,

coals, bread, and linsey-woolsey petticoats, which, under the provisions of the tablets in Duxmoor church, are distributed every Christmas. Of course, Mr. Lobbit supplied these gifts, as chief shop-keeper, and dispensed them, as senior and perpetual churchwarden. Lobbit gave capital dinners; plenty smoked on his board, and pipes of negro-head with jorums of gin punch followed, without stint.

"The two attorneys dined with him—and were glad to come, for he had always money to lend, on good security, and his gin was unexceptionable. So did two or three bullfrog farmers, very rich and very ignorant. The doctor and curate came occasionally; they were poor, and in his debt at 'The Shop,' therefore bound to laugh at his jokes—which were not so bad, for he was no fool—so that, altogether, Mr. Lobbit had reason to believe himself a very popular man.

"But there was—where is there not?—a black drop in his overflowing cup of prosperity.

"He had a son whom he intended to make a gentleman; whom he hoped to see married to some lady of good family, installed in the manor-house of Duxmoor, (if it should be sold cheap, at the end of the Chancery suit,) and established as the squire of the parish. Robert Lobbit had no taste for learning, and a strong taste for drinking, which his father's customers did their best to encourage. Old Lobbit was decent in his private habits; but, as he made money wherever he could to advantage, he was always surrounded by a levee of scamps, of all degrees—some agents and assistants, some borrowers, and would-be borrowers. Young Lobbit found it easier to follow the example of his father's companions than to follow his father's advice. He was as selfish and greedy as his father, without being so agreeable or hospitable. In the school-room he was a dunce, in the play-ground a tyrant and bully; no one liked him; but, as he had plenty of money, many courted him.

"As a last resource his father sent him to Oxford; whence, after a short residenec, he was expelled. He arrived home drunk, and in debt; without having lost one bad habit, or made one respectable friend. From that period he lived a sot, a village rake, the

king of the taproom, and the patron of a crowd of blackguards, who drank his beer and his health; hated him for his insolence, and cheated him of his money.

"Yet Joseph Lobbit loved his son, and tried not to believe the stories good-natured friends told of him.

"Another trouble fell upon the prosperous churchwarden. On the north side of the parish, just outside the boundaries of Duxmoor Manor, there had been, in the time of the Great Civil Wars, a large number of small freehold farmers: each with from forty to five acres of land; the smaller, fathers had divided among their progeny; the larger had descended to eldest sons by force of primogeniture. Joseph Lobbit's father had been one of these small freeholders. A right of pasture on an adjacent common was attached to these little freeholds; so, what with geese and sheep, and a cow or so, even the poorest proprietor, with the assistance of harvest work, managed to make a living, up to the time of the last war. War prices made land valuable, and the common was enclosed; though a share went to the little freeholders, and sons and daughters were hired, at good wages, while the enclosure was going on, the loss of the pasture for stock, and the fall of prices at the peace, sealed their fate. John Lobbit, our portly friend's father, succeeded to his little estate, of twenty acres, by the death of his elder brother, in the time of best war prices, after he had passed some years as a shopman in a great seaport. His first use of it was to sell it, and set up a shop in Duxmoor, to the great scandal of his farmer neighbours. When John slept with his fathers, Joseph, having succeeded to the shop and savings, began to buy land and lend money. Between shop credit to the five-acred and mortgages to the forty-acred men, with a little luck in the way of the useful sons of the freeholders being constantly enlisted for soldiers, impressed for sailors, or convicted for poaching offences, in the course of years Joseph Lobbit became possessed, not only of his paternal freehold, but, acre by acre, of all his neighbours' holdings, to the extent of something like five hundred acres. The original owners vanished; the stout and young departed, and were seen no more; the old and decrepit were received and kindly housed in the workhouse. Of course it could not have

been part of Mr. Lobbit's bargain to find them board and lodging for the rest of their days at the parish expense. A few are said to have drunk themselves to death; but this is improbable, for the cider in that part of the country is extremely sour, so that it is more likely they died of colic.

"There was, however, in the very centre of the cluster of freeholds which the parochial dignitary had so successfully acquired, a small barren plot of five acres with a right of road through the rest of the property. The possessor of this was a sturdy fellow, John Bodger by name, who was neither to be coaxed nor bullied into parting with his patrimony.

"John Bodger was an only son, a smart little fellow, a capital thatcher, a good hand at cobhouse building—in fact a handy man. Unfortunately, he was as fond of pleasure as his betters. He sang a comic song till peoples' eyes ran over, and they rolled on their seats: he handled a singlestick very tidily; and, among the light weights, was not to be despised as a wrestler. He always knew where a hare was to be found; and, when the fox-hounds were out, to hear his view-halloo did your heart good. These tastes were expensive; so that when he came into his little property, although he worked with tolerable industry, and earned good wages for that part of the country, he never had a shilling to the fore, as the Irish say. If he had been a prudent man, he might have laid by something very snug, and defied Mr. Lobbit to the end of his days.

"It would take too long to tell all Joseph Lobbit's ingenious devices—after plain, plump offers—to buy Bodger's acres had been refused. John Bodger declined a loan to buy a cart and horse; he refused to take credit or a new hat, umbrella, and waistcoat, after losing his money at Bidecot Fair. He went on steadily slaving at his bit of land, doing all the best thatching and building jobs in the neighbourhood, spending his money, and enjoying himself without getting into any scrapes; until Mr. Joseph Lobbit, completely foiled, began to look on John Bodger as a personal enemy.

"Just when John and his neighbours were rejoicing over the defeat of the last attempt of the jolly parochial, an accident occurred which upset all John's prudent calculations. He fell in love.

He might have married Dorothy Paulson, the blacksmith's daughter—an only child, with better than two hundred pounds in the bank, and a good business—a virtuous, good girl, too, except that she was as thin as a hurdle, with a skin like a nutmeg-grater, and rather a bad temper. But instead of that, to the surprise of every one, he went and married Carry Hutchins, the daughter of Widow Hutchins, one of the little freeholders bought out by Mr. Lobbit, who died, poor old soul, the day after she was carried into the workhouse, leaving Carry and her brother Tom destitute—that is to say, destitute of goods, money, or credit, but not of common sense, good health, good looks, and power of earning wages.

"Carry was nearly a head taller than John, with a face like a ripe pear. He had to buy her wedding gown, and every thing else. He bought them at Lobbit's shop. Tom Hutchins—he was fifteen years old—a tall, spry lad, accepted five shillings from his brother-in-law, hung a small bundle on his bird's-nesting stick, and set off to walk to Bristol, to be a sailor. He was never heard of any more at Duxmoor.

"At first all went well. John left off going to wakes and fairs, except on business; stuck to his trades; brought his garden into good order, and worked early and late, when he could spare time, at his two fields, while his wife helped him famously. If they had had a few pounds in hand, they would have had 'land and beeves.'

"But the first year twins came—a boy and girl; and the next another girl, and then twins again, and so on. Before Mrs. Bodger was thirty she had nine hearty, healthy children, with a fair prospect of plenty more; while John was a broken man, soured, discontented, hopeless. No longer did he stride forth eagerly to his work, after kissing mother and babies; no longer did he hurry home to put a finishing-stroke to the potato-patch, or broadcast his oat crop; no longer did he sit whistling and telling stories of bygone feats at the fireside, while mending some wooden implement of his own, or making one for a neighbour. Languid and moody, he lounged to his task with round shoulders and slouching gait; spoke seldom—when he did, seldom kindly. His children, except the youngest, feared him, and his wife scarcely opened her lips, except to answer.

"A long, hard, severe winter, and a round of typhus fever, which carried off two children, finished him. John Bodger was beaten, and obliged to sell his bit of land. He had borrowed money on it from the lawyer; while laid up with fever he had silently allowed his wife to run up a bill at 'The Shop.' When strong enough for work there was no work to be had. Lobbit saw his opportunity, and took it. John Bodger wanted to buy a cow, he wanted seed, he wanted to pay the doctor, and to give his boys clothes to enable them to go to service. He sold his land for what he thought would do all this and leave a few pounds in hand. He attended to sign the deed and receive money; when instead of the balance of twenty-five pounds he had expected, he received one pound ten shillings, and a long lawyer's bill *receipted*.

He did not say much; for poor countrymen don't know how to talk to lawyers, but he went toward home like a drunken man; and, not hearing the clatter of a horse behind him that had run away, was knocked down, run over, and picked up with his collar-bone and two ribs broken.

The next day he was delirious; in the course of a fortnight he came to his senses, lying on a workhouse bed. Before he could rise from the workhouse bed, not a stick or stone had been left to tell where the cottage of his fathers had stood for more than two hundred years, and Mr. Joseph Lobbit had obtained, in auctioneering phrase, a magnificent estate of five hundred acres within a ring fence.

"John Bodger stood up at length a ruined, desperate, dangerous man, pale, and weak, and even humble. He said nothing; the fever seemed to have tamed every limb—every feature—except his eyes, which glittered like an adder's when Mr. Lobbit came to talk to him. Lobbit saw it and trembled in his inmost heart, yet was ashamed of being afraid of a *pauper!*

"About this time Swing fires made their appearance in the country, and the principal insurance companies refused to insure farming stock, to the consternation of Mr. Lobbit; for he had lately begun to suspect that among Mr. Swing's friends he was not very popular, yet he had some thousand pounds of corn-stacks in his own yards and those of his customers.

"John Bodger, almost convalescent, was anxious to leave the poorhouse, while the master, the doctor, and every official, seemed in a league to keep him there and make him comfortable, although a short time previously the feeling had been quite different. But the old rector of Duxmoor having died at the early age of sixty-six, in spite of his care for his health, had been succeeded by a man who was not content to leave his duties to deputies; all the parish affairs underwent a keen criticism, and John and his large family came under investigation. His story came out. The new rector pitied and tried to comfort him; but his soothing words fell on deaf ears. The only answer he could get from John was, 'A hard life while it lasts, sir, and a pauper's grave, a pauper widow, pauper children; Parson, while this is all you can offer John Bodger, preaching to him is of no use.'

"With the wife the clergyman was more successful. Hope and belief are planted more easily in the hearts of women than of men, for adversity softens the one and hardens the other. The rector was not content with exhorting the poor; he applied to the rich Joseph Lobbit on behalf of John Bodger's family, and as the rector was not only a truly Christian priest, but a gentleman of good family and fortune, the parochial ruler was obliged to hear and to heed.

"Bland and smooth, almost pathetic, was Joseph Lobbit: he was 'heartily sorry for the poor man and his large family; should be happy to offer him and his wife permanent employment on his Hill farm, as well as two of the boys and one of the girls.'

"The eldest son and daughter, the first twins, had been for some time in respectable service. John would have nothing to do with Mr. Lobbit.

"While this discussion was pending, the news of a ship at Plymouth waiting for emigrants, reached Duxmoor.

"The parson and the great shopkeeper were observed in a long warm conference in the rectory garden, which ended in their shaking hands, and the rector proceeding with rapid strides to the poorhouse.

"The same day the lately established girls' school was set to work sewing garments of all sizes, as well as the females of the

rector's family. A week afterward there was a stir in the village; a wagon moved slowly away, laden with a father, mother, and large family, and a couple of pauper orphan girls. Yes, it was true; John and Carry Bodger were going to 'furrin parts,' 'to be made slaves on.' The women cried, and so did the children from imitation. The men stared. As the emigrants passed the Red Lion there was an attempt at a cheer from two tinkers; but it was a failure; no one joined in. So staring and staring, the men stood until the wagon crept round the turn of the lane and over the bridge, out of sight; then bidding the 'wives' go home and be hanged to 'em, their lords, that had two-pence, went in to spend it at the Red Lion, and those who had not, went in to see the others drink, and talk over John Bodger's 'bouldness,' and abuse Muster Lobbit quietly, so that no one in top-boots should hear them;—for they were poor ignorant people in Duxmoor—they had no one to teach them, or to care for them, and after the fever, and a long hard winter, they cared little for their own flesh and blood, still less for their neighbours. So John Bodger was forgotten almost before he was out of sight.

"By the road-wagon which the Bodgers joined when they reached the highway, it was a three days' journey to Plymouth.

"But, although they were gone, Mr. Lobbit did not feel quite satisfied; he felt afraid lest John should return and do him some secret mischief. He wished to see him on board ship, and fairly under sail. Besides his negotiation with Emigration Brokers had opened up ideas of a new way of getting rid, not only of dangerous fellows like John Bodger, but of all kinds of useless paupers. These ideas he afterward matured, and although important changes have taken place in our emigrating system, even in 1851, a visit to government ships, will present many specimens of parish inmates converted, by dexterous diplomacy, into independent labourers.

"Thus it was, that contrary to all precedent, Mr. Lobbit left his shopman to settle the difficult case of credit with his Christmas customers, and with best horse made his way to Plymouth; and now for the first time in his life floated on salt water.

"With many grunts and groans he climbed the ship's side; not

being as great a man at Plymouth as at Duxmoor, no chair was lowered to receive his portly person. The mere fact of having to climb up a rope-ladder from a rocking boat on a breezy, freezing day, was not calculated to give comfort or confident feelings to an elderly gentleman. With some difficulty, not without broken shins, amid the sarcastic remarks of groups of wild Irishmen, and the squeaks of bare-footed children—who not knowing his awful parochial character, tumbled about Mr. Lobbit's legs in a most impertinently familiar manner—he made his way to the captain's cabin, and there transacted some mysterious business with the Emigration Agent over a prime piece of mess beef and a glass of Madeira. The Madeira warmed Mr. Lobbit. The captain assured him positively that the ship would sail with the evening tide. That assurance removed a heavy load from his breast: he felt like a man who had been performing a good action, and also cheated himself into believing that he had been spending *his own* money in charity; so, at the end of the second bottle, he willingly chimed in with the broker's proposal to go down below and see how the emigrants were stowed, and have a last look at his 'lot.'

"Down the steep ladder they stumbled into the misery of a 'bounty' ship. A long, dark gallery, on each side of which were ranged the berths; narrow shelves open to every prying eye; where, for four months, the inmates were to be packed like herrings in a barrel, without room to move, almost without air to breathe; the mess table, running far aft the whole distance between the masts, left little room for passing, and that little was encumbered with all manner of boxes, packages, and infants, crawling about like rabbits in a warren.

"The groups of emigrants were characteristically employed. The Irish 'coshering,' or gossiping; for, having little or no baggage to look after, they had little care; but lean and ragged, monopolized almost all the good-humour of the ship. Acute cockneys, a race fit for every change, hammering, whistling, screwing and making all snug in their berths; tidy mothers, turning with despair from alternate and equally vain attempts to collect their numerous children out of danger, and to pack the necessaries of a room into the space of a small cupboard, wept and worked away.

Here, a ruined tradesman, with his family, sat at the table, dinnerless, having rejected the coarse, tough salt meat in disgust: there, a half-starved group fed heartily on rations from the same cask, luxuriated over the allowance of grog, and the idea of such a good meal daily. Songs, groans, oaths: crying, laughing, complaining, hammering and fiddling combined to produce a chaos of strange sounds; while thrifty wives, with spectacle on nose, mended their husband's breeches, and unthrifty ones scolded.

"Amid this confusion, under the authoritative guidance of the second mate, Mr. Lobbit made his way, inwardly calculating how many poachers, pauper refractories, Whiteboys, and Captain Rocks, were about to benefit Australia by their talents, until he reached a party which had taken up its quarters as far as possible from the Irish, in a gloomy corner near the stern. It consisted of a sickly, feeble woman, under forty, but worn, wasted, retaining marks of former beauty in a pair of large, dark, speaking eyes, and a well-carvèd profile, who was engaged in nursing two chubby infants, evidently twins, while two little things, just able to walk, hung at her skirts; a pale, thin boy, nine or ten years old, was mending a jacket; an elder brother, as brown as a berry, fresh from the fields, was playing dolefully on a hemlock flute. The father, a little, round-shouldered man, was engaged in cutting wooden buttons from a piece of hard wood with his pocket-knife; when he caught sight of Mr. Lobbit he hastily pulled off his coat, threw it into his berth, and, turning his back, worked away vigorously at the stubborn bit of oak he was carving.

"'Hallo, John Bodger, so here you are at last,' cried Mr. Lobbit; 'I've broken my shins, almost broken my neck, and spoilt my coat with tar and pitch, in finding you out. Well, you're quite at home, I see: twins all well?—both pair of them? How do you find yourself, Missis?'

"The pale woman sighed, and cuddled her babies—the little man said nothing, but sneered, and made the chips fly faster.

"'You're on your way now to a country where twins are no object; your passage is paid, and you've only got now to pray for the good gentlemen that have given you a chance of earning an honest living.'

"No answer.

"'I see them all here except Mary, the young lady of the family. Pray, has she taken rue, and determined to stay in England, after all; I expected as much'——

"As he spoke, a young girl, in the neat dress of a parlour servant, came out of the shade.

"'Oh! you are there, are you, Miss Mary? So you have made up your mind to leave your place and Old England, to try your luck in Australia; plenty of husbands there: ha, ha!'

"The girl blushed, and sat down to sew at some little garments. Fresh, rosy, neat, she was as great a contrast to her brother, the brown, ragged ploughboy, as he was to the rest of the family, with their flabby, bleached complexions.

"There was a pause. The mate, having done his duty by finding the parochial dignitary's *protegés*, had slipped away to more important business; a chorus of sailors 'yo heave ho-ing' at a chain cable had ceased, and for a few moments, by common consent, silence seemed to have taken possession of the long, dark gallery of the hold.

"Mr. Lobbit was rather put out by the silence, and no answers; he did not feel so confident as when crowing on his own dunghill, in Duxmoor; he had a vague idea that some one might steal behind him in the dark, knock his hat over his eyes, and pay off old scores with a hearty kick: but parochial dignity prevailed, and, clearing his throat with a 'hem,' he began again—

"'John Bodger, where's your coat?—what are you shivering there for, in your sleeves?—what have you done with the excellent coat generously presented to you by the parish—a coat that cost, as per contract, fourteen shillings and fourpence—you have not dared to sell it, I hope?'

"'Well, Master Lobbit, and if I did, the coat was my own, I suppose?'

"'What, sir?'

"The little man quailed; he had tried to pluck up his spirit, but the blood did not flow fast enough. He went to his berth and brought out the coat.

"It was certainly a curious colour, a sort of yellow brown, the

cloth shrunk and cockled up, and the metal buttons turned a dingy black.

"Mr. Lobbit raved; 'a new coat entirely spoiled, what had he done to it?' and as he raved he warmed, and felt himself at home again, deputy acting chairman of the Duxmoor Vestry. But the little man, instead of being frightened, grew red, lost his humble mien, stood up, and at length, when his tormentor paused for breath, looked him full in the face, and cried, 'Hang your coat! —hang you!—hang all the parochials of Duxmoor! What have I done with your coat? Why, I've dyed it; I've dipped it in a tan-yard; I was not going to carry your livery with me. I mean to have the buttons off before I'm an hour older. Gratitude you talk of;—thanks you want, you old hypocrite, for sending me away. I'll tell you what sent me,—it was that poor wench and her twins, and a letter from the office, saying they would not insure your ricks, while lucifer matches are so cheap. Ay, you may stare—you wonder who told me that; but I can tell you more. Who is it writes so like his father the bank can't tell the difference?'

"Mr. Lobbit turned pale.

"'Be off!' said the little man; 'plague us no more. You have eaten me up with your usury; you've got my cottage and my bit of land; you've made paupers of us all, except that dear lass, and the one lad, and you'd wellnigh made a convict of me. But never mind. This will be a cold, drear Christmas to us, and a merry, fat one to you; but, perhaps, the Christmas may come when Master Joseph Lobbit would be glad to change places with poor, ruined John Bodger. I am going where I am told that sons and daughters like mine are better than "silver, yea, than fine gold." I leave you rich on the poor man's inheritance, and poor man's flesh and blood. You have a son and daughter that will revenge me. "Cursed are they that remove landmarks, and devour the substance of the poor!"'

"While this, one of the longest speeches that John Bodger was ever known to make, was being delivered, a little crowd had collected, who, without exactly understanding the merits of the case, had no hesitation in taking side with their fellow-passenger,

the poor man with the large family. The Irish began to inquire if the stout gentleman was a tithe-proctor or a driver? Murmurs of a suspicious character arose, in the midst of which, in a very hasty, undignified manner, Mr. Lobbit backed out, climbed up to the deck with extraordinary agility, and, without waiting to make any complaints to the officers of the ship, slipped down the side into a boat, and never felt himself safe, until called to his senses by an attempt on the part of the boatman to exact four times the regular fare.

"But a good dinner at the Globe (at parochial expense) and a report from the agent that the ship had sailed, restored Mr. Lobbit's equanimity; and by the time that, snugly packed in the mail, he was rattling along toward home by a moonlight Christmas, he began to think himself a martyr to a tender heart, and to console himself by calculating the value of the odd corner of Bodger's acres, cut up into lots for his labourers' cottages. The result—fifty per cent.—proved a balm to his wounded feelings.

"I wish I could say that at the same hour John Bodger was comforting his wife and little ones; sorry am I to report that he left them to weep and complain, while he went forward and smoked his pipe, and sang, and drank grog with a jolly party in the forecastle—for John's heart was hardened, and he cared little for God or man.

"This old, fond love for his wife and children seemed to have died away. He left them, through the most part of the voyage, to shift for themselves—sitting forward, sullenly smoking, looking into vacancy, and wearying the sailors with asking, 'How many knots to-day, Jack? When do you think we shall see land?' So that the women passengers took a mortal dislike to him; and it being gossiped about that when his wife was in the hospital he never went to see her for two days, they called him a brute. So 'Bodger the Brute' he was called until the end of the voyage. Then they were all dispersed, and such stories driven out of mind by new scenes.

"John was hired to go into the far interior, where it was difficult to get free servants at all; so his master put up with the dead-weight encumbrance of the babies, in consideration of the

clever wife and string of likely lads. Thus, in a new country, he began life again in a blue jersey and ragged corduroys, but with the largest money income he had ever known."

The second scene is a picture of John Bodger's prosperity in Australia, where eviction and workhouses are forgotten. If Australia had not been open to John as a refuge, most probably he would have become a criminal, or a worthless vagrant. Here is the second scene:—

"In 1842, my friend Mrs. C. made one of her marches through the bush with an army of emigrants. These consisted of parents with long families, rough, country-bred single girls, with here and there a white-handed, useless young lady—the rejected ones of the Sydney hirers. In these marches she had to depend for the rations of her ragged regiment on the hospitality of the settlers on her route, and was never disappointed, although it often happened that a day's journey was commenced without any distinct idea of who would furnish the next dinner and breakfast.

"On one of these foraging excursions—starting at day-dawn on horseback, followed by her man Friday, an old *lag*, (prisoner,) in a light cart, to carry the provender—she went forth to look for the flour, milk, and mullet, for the breakfast of a party whose English appetites had been sharpened by travelling at the pace of the drays all day, and sleeping in the open air all night.

"The welcome smoke of the expected station was found; the light cart, with the complements and empty sack despatched; when musing, at a foot-pace, perhaps on the future fortune of the half-dozen girls hired out the previous day, Mrs. C. came upon a small party which had also been encamping on the other side of the hills.

"It consisted of two gawky lads, in docked smock frocks, woolly hats, rosy, sleepy countenances—fresh arrivals, living monuments of the care bestowed in developing the intelligence

of the agricultural mind in England. They were hard at work on broiled mutton. A regular, hard-dried bushman had just driven up a pair of blood mares from their night's feed, and a white-headed, brisk kind of young old man, the master of the party, was sitting by the fire, trying to feed an infant with some sort of mess compounded with sugar. A dray, heavily laden, with a bullock-team ready harnessed, stood ready to start under the charge of a bullock-watchman.

"The case was clear to a colonial eye; the white-headed man had been down to the port from his bush-farm to sell his stuff, and was returning with two blood mares purchased, and two emigrant lads hired; but what was the meaning of the baby? We see strange things in the bush, but a man-nurse is strange even there.

"Although they had never met before, the white-headed man almost immediately recognised Mrs. C.,—for who did not know her, or of her, in the bush?—so was more communicative than he otherwise might have been; so he said—

"'You see, ma'am, my lady, I have only got on my own place these three years; having a long family, we found it best to disperse about where the best wages was to be got. We began saving the first year, and my daughters have married pretty well, and my boys got to know the ways of the country. There's three of them married, thanks to your ladyship; so we thought we could set up for ourselves. And we've done pretty tidy. So, as they were all busy at home, I went down for the first time to get a couple of mares, and see about hiring some lads out of the ships to help us. You see I have picked up two newish ones; I have docked their frocks to a useful length, and I think they'll do after a bit; they can't read, neither of them—no more could I when I first came—but our teacher (she's one my missis had from you) will soon fettle them; and I've got a power of things on the dray; I wish you could be there at unloading; for it being my first visit, I wanted something for all of them. But about this babby is a curious job. When I went aboard the ship to hire my shepherds, I looked out for some of my own country; and while I was asking, I heard of a poor woman whose husband

had been drowned in a drunken fit on the voyage, that was lying very ill, with a young babby, and not likely to live.

"'Something made me go to see her; she had no friends on board, she knew no one in the colony. She started, like, at my voice; one word brought on another, when it came out she was the wife of the son of my greatest enemy.

"'She had been his father's servant, and married the son secretly. When it was found out, he had to leave the country; thinking that once in Australia, the father would be reconciled, and the business that put her husband in danger might be settled. For this son was a wild, wicked man, worse than the father, but with those looks and ways that take the hearts of poor lasses. Well, as we talked, and I questioned her—for she did not seem so ill as they had told me—she began to ask me who I was, and I did not want to tell; when I hesitated, she guessed, and cried out, 'What, John Bodger, is it thee!'—and with that she screamed, and screamed, and went off quite light-headed, and never came to her senses until she died.

"'So, as there was no one to care for the poor little babby, and as we had such a lot at home, what with my own children and my grandchildren, I thought one more would make no odds, so the gentleman let me take it, after I'd seen the mother decently buried.

"'You see this feeding's a very awkward job, ma'am—and I've been five days on the road. But I think my missis will be pleased as much as with the gown I've brought her.'

"'What,' said Mrs. C., 'are you the John Bodger that came over in the 'Cassandra,'—the John B.?'

"'Yes, ma'am.'

"'John, the Brute?'

"'Yes, ma'am. But I'm altered, sure-*ly*.'

"'Well,' continued John, 'the poor woman was old Joseph Lobbit's daughter-in-law. Her husband had been forging, or something, and would have been lagged if he'd staid in England. I don't know but I might have been as bad if I had not got out of the country when I did. But there's something here in always getting on; and not such a struggling and striving that softens a

poor man's heart. And I trust what I've done for this poor babby and its mother may excuse my brutish behaviour. I could not help thinking when I was burying poor Jenny Lobbit, (I mind her well, a nice little lass, about ten years old,) I could not help thinking as she lay in a nice, cloth-covered coffin, and a beautiful stone cut with her name and age, and a text on her grave, how different it is even for poor people to be buried here. Oh, ma'am! a man like me, with a long family, can make ahead here, and do a bit of good for others worse off. We live while we live; when we die we are buried with decency. I remember, when my wife's mother died, the parish officers were so cross, and the boards of the coffin barely stuck together, and it was terrible cold weather, too. My Carry used to cry about it uncommonly all the winter. The swells may say what they like about it, but I'll be blessed if it be'ent worth all the voyage to die in it.'

"Not many days afterward, Mrs. C. saw John at home, surrounded by an army of sons and daughters; a patriarch, and yet not sixty years old; the grandchild of his greatest enemy the greatest pet of the family.

"In my mind's eye there are sometimes two pictures. John Bodger in the workhouse, thinking of murder and fire-raising in the presence of his prosperous enemy; and John Bodger, in his happy bush-home, nursing little Nancy Lobbit.

"At Duxmoor the shop has passed into other hands. The ex-shopkeeper has bought and rebuilt the manor-house. He is the squire, now, wealthier than ever he dreamed; on one estate a mine has been found; a railway has crossed and doubled the value of another; but his son is dead; his daughter has left him, and lives, he knows not where, a life of shame. Childless and friendless, the future is, to him, cheerless and without hope."

Poor-law guardians are characters held in very low esteem by the Irish serfs, who are not backward in expressing their contempt. The feeling is a natural one, as will appear from considering who those guardians generally are, and how they perform their duties:—

"At the introduction of the poor-law into Ireland, the workhouses were built by means of loans advanced by the Government on the security of the rates. Constructed generally in that style of architecture called 'Elizabethan,' they were the most imposing in the country in elevation and frequency, and, placed usually in the wretched suburbs of towns and villages, formed among the crumbling and moss-grown cottages, a pleasing contrast in the eye of the tourist. They were calculated to accommodate from five hundred to two thousand inmates, according to the area and population of the annexed district; but some of them remained for years altogether closed, or, if open, nearly unoccupied, owing to the ingenious shifts of the 'Guardians,' under the advice of the 'Solicitor of the Board.' Their object was to economize the resources of the Union, to keep the rates down, and in some instances they evaded the making of any rate for years after the support of the destitute was made nominally imperative by the law of the land.

"As there was a good deal of patronage in a small way placed at the disposal of the 'Guardians,' great anxiety was manifested by those eligible to the office. Most justices of the peace were, indeed, *ipso facto*, Guardians, but a considerable number had to be elected by the rate-payers, and an active canvass preceded every election. A great deal of activity and conviviality, if not gayety, was the result, and more apparently important affairs were neglected by many a farmer, shopkeeper, and professional man, to insure his being elected a 'Guardian,' while the unsuccessful took pains to prove their indifference, or to vent their ill-humour in various ways, sometimes causing less innocuous effects than the following sally:—

"At a certain court of quarter sessions, during the dog-day heat of one of these contests, a burly fellow was arraigned before 'their worships' and the jury, charged with some petty theft; and as he perceived that the proofs were incontestably clear against him, he fell into a very violent trepidation. An attorney of the court, not overburdened with business, and fond of occupying his idle time in playing off practical jokes, perceiving how the case stood, addressed the prisoner in a whisper over the side

of the dock, with a very ominous and commiserating shake of his head:

"'Ah, you unfortunate man, ye'll be found guilty; and as sure as ye are, ye'll get worse than hangin' or thransportation. As sure as ever the barristher takes a pinch of snuff, that's his intention; ye'll see him put on the black cap immaydiately. Plaid guilty at once, and I'll tell ye what ye'll say to him afther.'

"The acute practitioner knew his man; the poor half-witted culprit fell into the snare; and after a short and serious whispering between them, which was unobserved in the bustle of the court-house usual on such occasions, the prisoner cried out, just as the issue-paper was going up to the jury, 'Me lord, me lord, I plaid guilty; I beg your wortchip's an' their honours' pardon.

"'Very well,' said the assistant barrister, whose duty it was to advise upon the law of each case, and preside at the bench in judicial costume; 'very well, sir. Crier, call silence.'

"Several voices immediately called energetically for silence, impressing the culprit with grave ideas at once of his worship's great importance, and the serious nature of the coming sentence.

"'Withdraw the plea of not guilty, and take one of guilty to the felony,' continued the assistant barrister, taking a pinch of snuff and turning round to consult his brother magistrates as to the term of intended incarceration.

"'Don't lose yer time, ye omodhaun!' said the attorney, with an angry look at the prisoner.

"'Will I be allowed to spake one word, yer wortchips?' said the unfortunate culprit.

"'What has he to say?' said the assistant barrister with considerable dignity.

"'Go on, ye fool ye,' urged the attorney.

"'My lord, yer wortchips, and gintlemin av the jury,' exclaimed the culprit, 'sind me out o' the counthry, or into jail, or breakin' stones, or walkin' on the threadmill, or any thing else in the coorse o' nature, as yer wortchips playses; but for the love o' the Virgin Mary, *don't make me a Poor-Law Gargin.*'"*

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* Household Words.

The most recent legislation of the British government in regard to Ireland, the enactment of the Poor-law and the Encumbered Estates Act, has had but one grand tendency—that of diminishing the number of the population, which is, indeed, a strange way to improve the condition of the nation. The country was not too thickly populated; far from it: great tracts of land were entirely uninhabited. The exterminating acts were, therefore, only measures of renewed tyranny. To enslave a people is a crime of sufficient enormity; but to drive them from the homes of their ancestors to seek a refuge in distant and unknown lands, is such an action as only the most monstrous of governments would dare to perform.

We have thus shown that Ireland has long endured, and still endures, a cruel system of slavery, for which we may seek in vain for a parallel. It matters not that the Irish serf may leave his country; while he remains he is a slave to a master who will not call him property, chiefly because it would create the necessity of careful and expensive ownership. If the Irish master took his labourer for his slave in the American sense, he would be compelled to provide for him, work or not work, in sickness and in old age. Thus the master reaps the benefits, and escapes the penalties of slave-holding. He takes the fruits of the labourer's toil without providing for him as the negro slaves of America are provided for; nay, very often he refuses

the poor wretch a home at any price. In no other country does the slaveholder seem so utterly reckless in regard to human life as in Ireland. After draining all possible profit from his labourer's service he turns him forth as a pauper, to get scant food if workhouse officials choose to give it, and if not, to starve by the wayside. The last great famine was the direct result of this accursed system of slavery. It was oppression of the worst kind that reduced the mass of the people to depend for their subsistence upon the success or failure of the potato crop; and the horrors that followed the failure of the crop were as much the results of misgovernment as the crimes of the French Revolution were the consequences of feudal tyranny, too long endured. Can England ever accomplish sufficient penance for her savage treatment of Ireland?

Some English writers admit that the degradation of the Irish and the wretched condition of the country can scarcely be overdrawn, but seek for the causes of this state of things in the character of the people. But why does the Irishman work, prosper, and achieve wealth and position under every other government but that of Ireland? This would not be the case if there was any thing radically wrong in the Irish nature. In the following extract from an article in the Edinburgh Review, we have a forcible sketch of the condition of Ireland, coloured somewhat to suit English views:—

"It is obvious that the insecurity of a community in which the bulk of the population form a conspiracy against the law, must prevent the importation of capital; must occasion much of what is accumulated there to be exported; and must diminish the motives and means of accumulation. Who will send his property to a place where he cannot rely on its being protected? Who will voluntarily establish himself in a country which to-morrow may be in a state of disturbance? A state in which, to use the words of Chief Justice Bushe, 'houses and barns and granaries are levelled, crops are laid waste, pasture-lands are ploughed, plantations are torn up, meadows are thrown open to cattle, cattle are maimed, tortured, killed; persons are visited by parties of banditti, who inflict cruel torture, mutilate their limbs, or beat them almost to death. Men who have in any way become obnoxious to the insurgents, or opposed their system, or refused to participate in their outrages, are deliberately assassinated in the open day; and sometimes the unoffending family are indiscriminately murdered by burning the habitation.'* A state in which even those best able to protect themselves, the gentry, are forced to build up all their lower windows with stone and mortar; to admit light only into one sitting-room, and not into all the windows of that room; to fortify every other inlet by bullet-proof barricades; to station sentinels around during all the night and the greater part of the day, and to keep firearms in all the bedrooms, and even on the side-table at breakfast and dinner-time.† Well might Bishop Doyle exclaim, 'I do not blame the absentees; I would be an absentee myself if I could.'

"The state of society which has been described may be considered as a proof of the grossest ignorance; for what can be a greater proof of ignorance than a systematic opposition to law, carried on at the constant risk of liberty and of life, and pro-

* Charge on the Marlborough Commission, p. 5. Cited in Lewis's Irish Disturbances, p. 227.

† See the evidence of Mr. Blacker, House of Commons' Report on the State of Ireland, 1824, p. 75; that of Mr. Griffiths, *ibid.* 232; and that of Mr. Blacker, House of Lords' Report, 1824, p. 14.

ducing where it is most successful, in the rural districts, one level of hopeless poverty, and in the towns, weeks of high wages and months without employment—a system in which tremendous risks and frightful sufferings are the means, and general misery is the result? The ignorance, however, which marks the greater part of the population in Ireland, is not merely ignorance of the moral and political tendency of their conduct—an ignorance in which the lower orders of many more advanced communities participate—but ignorance of the businesses which are their daily occupations. It is ignorance, not as citizens and subjects, but as cultivators and labourers. They are ignorant of the proper rotation of crops, of the preservation and use of manure—in a word, of the means by which the land, for which they are ready to sacrifice their neighbours' lives, and to risk their own, is to be made productive. Their manufactures, such as they are, are rude and imperfect, and the Irish labourer, whether peasant or artisan, who emigrates to Great Britain, never possesses skill sufficient to raise him above the lowest ranks in his trade.

"Indolence—the last of the causes to which we have attributed the existing misery of Ireland—is not so much an independent source of evil as the result of the combination of all others. The Irishman does not belong to the races that are by nature averse from toil. In England, Scotland, or America he can work hard. He is said, indeed, to require more overlooking than the natives of any of these countries, and to be less capable, or, to speak more correctly, to be less willing to surmount difficulties by patient intellectual exertion; but no danger deters, no disagreeableness disgusts, no bodily fatigue discourages him.

"But in his own country he is indolent. All who have compared the habits of hired artisans or of the agricultural labourers in Ireland with those of similar classes in England or Scotland, admit the inferiority of industry of the former. The indolence of the great mass of the people, the occupiers of land, is obvious even to the passing traveller. Even in Ulster, the province in which, as we have already remarked, the peculiarities of the Irish character are least exhibited, not only are the cabins, and even the farm-houses, deformed within and without by accumula-

tions of filth, which the least exertion would remove, but the land itself is suffered to waste a great portion of its productive power. We have ourselves seen field after field in which the weeds covered as much space as the crops. From the time that his crops are sowed and planted until they are reaped the peasant and his family are cowering over the fire, or smoking, or lounging before the door, when an hour or two a day employed in weeding their potatoes, oats, or flax, would perhaps increase the produce by one-third.

"The indolence of the Irish artisan is sufficiently accounted for by the combinations which, by prohibiting piece-work, requiring all the workmen to be paid by the day and at the same rate, prohibiting a good workman from exerting himself, have destroyed the motives to industry. 'I consider it,' says Mr. Murray, 'a very hard rule among them, that the worst workman that ever took a tool in his hand, should be paid the same as the best, but that is the rule and regulation of the society; and that there was only a certain quantity of work allowed to be done; so that, if one workman could turn more work out of his hands, he durst not go on with it. There is no such thing as piece-work; and if a bad man is not able to get through his work, a good workman dare not go further than he does.'*

"The indolence of the agricultural labourer arises, perhaps, principally from his labour being almost always day-work, and in a great measure a mere payment of debt—a mere mode of working out his rent. That of the occupier may be attributed to a combination of causes. In the first place, a man must be master of himself to a degree not common even among the educated classes, before he can be trusted to be his own task-master. Even among the British manufacturers, confessedly the most industrious labourers in Europe, those who work in their own houses are comparatively idle and irregular, and yet they work under the stimulus of certain and immediate gain. The Irish occupier, working for a distant object, dependent in some

* House of Commons' Committee on Combinations, 1838. Questions 5872–5876.

measure on the seasons, and with no one to control or even to advise him, puts off till to-morrow what need not necessarily be done to-day—puts off till next year what need not necessarily be done this year, and ultimately leaves much totally undone.

"Again, there is no damper so effectual as liability to taxation proportioned to the means of payment. It is by this instrument that the Turkish government has destroyed the industry, the wealth, and ultimately the population of what were once the most flourishing portions of Asia—perhaps of the world. It is thus that the *taille* ruined the agriculture of the most fertile portions of France. Now, the Irish occupier has long been subject to this depressive influence, and from various sources. The competition for land has raised rents to an amount which can be paid only under favourable circumstances. Any accident throws the tenant into an arrear, and the arrear is kept a subsisting charge, to be enforced if he should appear capable of paying it. If any of the signs of prosperity are detected in his crop, his cabin, his clothes, or his food, some old demand may be brought up against him. Again, in many districts a practice prevails of letting land to several tenants, each of whom is responsible for the whole rent. It is not merely the consequence, but the intention, that those who can afford to pay should pay for those who cannot. Again, it is from taxation, regulated by apparent property, that all the revenues of the Irish Catholic Church are drawn. The half-yearly offerings, the fees on marriages and christenings, and, what is more important, the contributions to the priests made on those occasions by the friends of the parties, are all assessed by public opinion, according to the supposed means of the payer. An example of the mode in which this works, occurred a few months ago, within our own knowledge. £300 was wanted by a loan fund, in a Catholic district in the North of Ireland. In the night, one of the farmers, a man apparently poor, came to his landlord, the principal proprietor in the neighbourhood, and offered to lend the money, if the circumstance could be kept from his priest. His motive for concealment was asked, and he answered, that, if the priest knew he had £300 at interest, his dues would be doubled. Secrecy was promised, and a stocking was brought

from its hiding-place in the roof, filled with notes and coin, which had been accumulating for years until a secret investment could be found. Again, for many years past a similar taxation has existed for political purposes. The Catholic rent, the O'Connell tribute, and the Repeal rent, like every other tax that is unsanctioned by law, must be exacted, to a larger or smaller amount, from every *cottier*, or farmer, as he is supposed to be better or worse able to provide for them.

"Who can wonder that the cultivator, who is exposed to these influences, should want the industry and economy which give prosperity to the small farmer in Belgium? What motive has he for industry and economy? It may be said that he has the same motive in kind, though not in degree, as the inhabitants of a happier country; since the new demand to which any increase of his means would expose him probably would not exhaust the whole of that increase. The same might be said of the subjects of the Pasha. There are inequalities of fortune among the cultivators of Egypt, just as there were inequalities in that part of France which was under the *taille*. No taxation ever exhausted the whole surplus income of all its victims. But when a man cannot calculate the extent to which the exaction may go—when all he knows is, that the more he appears to have the more will be demanded—when he knows that every additional comfort which he is seen to enjoy, and every additional productive instrument which he is found to possess, may be a pretext for a fresh extortion, he turns careless or sulky—he yields to the strong temptation of indolence and of immediate excitement and enjoyment—he becomes less industrious, and therefore produces less—he becomes less frugal, and therefore, if he saves at all, saves a smaller portion of that smaller product."

For the turbulence of the Irish people, the general indolence of the labourers and artisans, and the misery that exists, the writer of the above sketch has causes worthy of the acuteness of Sir James Graham, or some other patent political economist of the aristocracy of

England. We need not comment. We have only made the above quotation to show to what a condition Ireland has been reduced, according to the admissions of an aristocratic organ of England, leaving the reader acquainted with the history of English legislation in regard to the unhappy island to make the most natural inferences.

The ecclesiastical system of Ireland has long been denounced as an injury and an insult. As an insult it has no parallel in history. Oppression and robbery in matters connected with religion have been unhappily frequent; but in all other cases the oppressed and robbed have been the minority. That one-tenth of the population of a great country should appropriate to themselves the endowment originally provided for all their countrymen; that, without even condescending to inquire whether there were or were not a congregation of their own persuasion to profit by them, they should seize the revenues of every benefice, should divert them from their previous application, and should hand them over to an incumbent of their own, to be wasted as a sinecure if they were not wanted for the performance of a duty—this is a treatment of which the contumely stings more sharply even than the injustice, enormous as that is.*

The tax of a tithe for the support of a church in

* Edinburgh Review.

which they have no faith is a grievance of which Irish Catholics, who compose nine-tenths of the population of Ireland, complain with the greatest reason. Of what benefit to them is a church which they despise? The grand reason for the existence of an established church fails under such circumstances. The episcopal institutions can communicate no religious instruction, because the creed which they sustain is treated with contempt. But where is the use of argument in regard to this point. The Established Church affords many luxurious places for the scions of the aristocracy, and there lies the chief purpose of its existence. The oppressive taxation of Catholics to support a Protestant church will cease with the aristocracy.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE MENIAL SLAVES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

THE spirit of British institutions is nowhere more plainly and offensively manifested than in the treatment which domestic servants receive. The haughty bearing, the constant display of supreme contempt, and the frequency of downright cruelty on the part of the master or mistress, and the complete abasement and submission of the servant, have been repeatedly subjects of observation, and show clearly that the days of "lord and thrall" are vividly remembered in Great Britain. In Miss Martineau's "Society in America," we find some observations to the point. She says—

"However fascinating to Americans may be the luxury, conversational freedom, and high intellectual cultivation of English society, they cannot fail to be disgusted with the aristocratic insolence which is the vice of the whole. The puerile and barbaric spirit of contempt is scarcely known in America; the English insolence of class to class, of individuals toward each other, is not even conceived of, except in the one highly disgraceful instance of the treatment of people of colour. Nothing in American civilization struck me so forcibly and so pleasurably as the invariable respect paid to man, as man. Nothing since

my return to England has given me so much pain as the contrast there. Perhaps no Englishman can become fully aware, without going to America, of the atmosphere of insolence in which he dwells; of the taint of contempt which infects all the intercourses of his world. He cannot imagine how all he can say that is truest and best about the treatment of people of colour in America, is neutralized on the spot by its being understood how the same contempt is spread over the whole of society here, which is there concentrated upon the blacks."

It has been remarked that those who are most submissive as serfs are the most arrogant and tyrannical as lords. In Great Britain, from dukes down to workhouse officials, the truth of this remark is obvious. Each class treats its superior with abject deference, and its inferior with overbearing insolence. The corollary of our quotation from Miss Martineau is that the treatment masters give to their negro slaves in America, in their common intercourse, is what masters give to their servants in Great Britain. In the free States of America a master may command his servant, and if obedience is refused he may deduct from his wages or give him a discharge, but the laws prevent all violence; the man is never forgotten in the servant. Another state of affairs is to be found in Great Britain. The laws are inadequate in their construction and too costly in their administration to protect the poor servant. Should he refuse obedience, or irritate his master in any way, his punishment is just as likely to be kicks and blows as a discharge or a reduction of wages. English-

men have frequently complained, while doing business in the United States, because they were prevented from striking refractory persons in their employ. In attempting to act out their tyrannical ideas, such employers have been severely chastised by their free, republican servants.

What the serf of the feudal baron in the twelfth century was, the servant of modern days is, in the eyes of the lords and ladies of Great Britain. Between these aristocrats and their retainers there exists no fellow-feeling; the ties of our common brotherhood are snapped asunder, and a wide and startling gap intervenes. "Implicit obedience to commands, and a submissive, respectful demeanour on the one hand, are repaid by orders given in the most imperative tone, to perform the most degrading offices, and by a contemptuous, haughty demeanour on the other hand. In the servant the native dignity of our nature is for the time broken and crushed. In the master the worst passion of our nature is exhibited in all its hideous deformity. The spirit that dictated the expression, 'I am the porcelain, you are only the common clay,' is not confined to the original speaker, but, with few exceptions, is very generally participated in. It is not, however, solely by the aristocratic class that the servant is treated with such contumely, the fault is largely participated in by the middle and working classes.

The feelings of the English people are essentially aristocratic."*

Until recently an order was placed at the entrance to Kensington Gardens, which read as follows:—"*No Dogs or Livery Servants admitted.*" What more conclusive evidence of the degraded condition of menial servants in Great Britain could be obtained. A fellow-man, of good character—a necessary conclusion from his being in a situation—is placed on a level with brutes. The livery seems as much the badge of slavery in the nineteenth century as the collar of iron was in the days of baron and villain. It is a bar to the reception of a servant in any genteel society, and thus constantly reminds him of his debased condition. He can have but little hope of improving that condition, when all intercourse with persons of superior fortune or attainments is so effectually prevented. A menial he is, and menials must his children be, unless they should meet with extraordinary fortune. The following letter of a footman recently appeared in the "Times" newspaper. It is manly, and to the point.

"Many articles having appeared in your paper under the term 'Flunkeyana,' all depreciatory of poor flunkeys, may I be allowed to claim a fair and impartial hearing on the other side? I am a footman, a liveried flunkey, a pampered menial—terms which one Christian employs to another, simply because he is, by the Almighty Dispenser of all things, placed, in his wisdom, lower

* Servants and Servitude, in Howitt's Journal.

in life than the other. Not yet having seen any defence of servants, may I trust to your candour and your generosity to insert this humble apology for a set of men constrained by circumstances to earn their living by servitude? The present cry seems to be to lower their wages. I will state simply a few broad facts. I am a footman in a family in which I have lived thirteen years. My master deems my services worth 24 guineas a year. The question is, is this too much? I will strike the average of expenditure. I am very economical, it is considered. I find for washing I pay near £6 a year; shoes, £4 10*s.*; tea and sugar, £2 12*s.*; wearing apparel, say £4 4*s.*; for books—I am a reader—I allow myself £1 7*s.* You will see this amounts to £18 7*s.* each year. I include nothing for amusement of any kind, but say 13*s.* yearly. I thus account for £19 yearly, leaving £6 for savings. One or two other things deserve, I think, a slight notice. What is the character required of a mechanic or labourer? None. What of a servant? Is he honest, sober, steady, religious, cleanly, active, industrious, an early riser? Is he married? Wo be to the poor fellow who does not answer yes to this category of requests, save the last! The answer is, Your character does not suit; you will not do for me. Again: does a servant forget himself for once only, and get tipsy?—he is ruined for life. In a word, sir, a thorough servant must be sober, steady, honest, and single; he must never marry, must never be absent from his duties, must attend to his master in sickness or in health, must be reviled and never reply, must be young, able, good-tempered, and willing, and think himself overpaid if at the year's end he has 5*s.* to put in his pocket. In old age or sickness he may go to the workhouse, the only asylum open. In youth he has plenty of the best, and can get one service when he leaves another, if his character is good; but when youth deserts him, and age and sickness creep on, what refuge is there for him? No one will have him. He is too old for service, that is his answer. In service he is trusted with valuable articles of every description; and in what state of life, whether servant or artisan, surely he who is placed in situations of trust deserves a trifle more of recompense than is sufficient to pay his way and no more."

We have mentioned, in other chapters, some instances of the cruel treatment of parish children apprenticed to trades. We have also evidence that those who are bound out as servants are subjected to the most brutal tyranny. Occasionally, when the cases become so outrageous as to be noised abroad, investigations are held; but these instances are few compared with the vast number of cases of cruel treatment of which the public are permitted to hear nothing.

In the latter part of December, 1850, one Mr. Sloane, a special pleader, residing in the Middle Temple, was guilty of the most frightful cruelty to a servant-girl named Jane Wilbred, formerly an inmate of the West London Union. The girl, or some of her friends, complained, and Mr. Sloane was brought before Alderman Humphrey, at Guildhall. During the examination, evidence of the most brutal treatment of the poor girl was given, and such was the nature of the statements made on oath that the fury of the people was aroused. Mr. Sloane was committed for trial. When he was conveyed to the Compter the mob attacked the cab, and seemed determined to apply Lynch law. But the wretch was safely deposited in prison, through the exertions of the police. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment; but whether he served out his sentence we are not informed. This was one case of punishment for a thousand of impunity.

So great was the indignation of the people at the de-

velopments made upon the trial of Sloane, that some measure of alleviation in regard to parish apprentices and servants was deemed necessary. The Earl of Carlisle, (late Lord Morpeth), brought in a bill in the House of Commons, the object of which was to compel the parish guardians and the binding magistrates to watch over and protect the helpless servants and apprentices. The bill was passed by Parliament; but it is inoperative and ineffectual. Parish guardians are too glad to get the children off their hands to take any steps which might retard the desired consummation; and the children can easily be prevented from making complaints to magistrates by the threats of masters and mistresses, and the common fear of consequences. In this case, as in all legislation concerning the poor, the Parliament of Great Britain has proceeded upon the same principle as the physician who applies external remedies for diseases which have internal causes. Instead of endeavouring to remove the great causes of pauperism—the monopolies of the aristocracy—it only seeks to render the paupers easier in their condition.

Mr. Mayhew, in his "London Labour and the London Poor," shows that a large number of the vagrants of London and other English cities, are young persons who have been servants, and have run away in consequence of ill-treatment. Rather than be constantly treated as slaves, the boys prefer to be vagabonds and the girls prostitutes. They then enjoy a wild kind of

freedom, which, with all its filth and vice, has some share of pleasure, unknown to those who move at the beck of a master or mistress, and live in constant dread of the rod.

In those countries where society is untainted with aristocracy, the servant when performing duties is respected as a human being—with a mind to think and a heart to feel—one to be reprimanded or discharged from service for neglect or positive wrong, but never beaten as a soulless beast. In England, the servant, to hold a place, must be a most abject, cringing, and submissive slave. In some countries, the taint of negro blood keeps a man always in the position of an inferior. In England, the man of "serf blood," though he be a Celt or Saxon, is ever treated as a hind by the man of "noble blood;" and the possession of this same "noble blood" justifies the most infamous scoundrel in treating his domestics, not only with contempt, but positive cruelty. Americans have been charged with having an undying horror of the negro taint. In England, the *common* blood is just as steadily abhorred by the dominant class. The slavery of servants—their hopeless, abject, and demoralizing condition—is the result, direct and unmistakable, of the existence of the aristocracy. When the serfs are completely freed; when the country is no longer ruled by a few thousand persons; when a long line of ancestry and magnificent escutcheons cease to dignify imbeciles and blackguards; in short, when

England takes a few steps upon that glorious path which the great American republic has hewn for the nations of the earth—there will be sure respect for man, as man; and the servants may have some hope of improving their condition.

## CHAPTER IX.

### MENTAL AND MORAL CONDITION OF THE WHITE SLAVES IN GREAT BRITAIN.

THE moral degradation and mental darkness of the labouring classes in Great Britain in the middle of the Nineteenth century, are appalling to contemplate. Beneath the wing of a government professedly Christian, there is sheltered a vast number of people who must be characterized as heathen—as fit subjects of missionary labours, such as are freely given to the dark sons of India and Africa. They know nothing of God but his prevailing name; and the Bible's light is hid from them as completely as if its pages were inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphics. Their code of morals is the creature of their sensual inclinations; their intelligence seemingly the superior instinct of the animal. Scotland is far beyond other portions of Great Britain in the moral and mental cultivation of its people; but there is a large class in that country to which the above observations may be justly applied.

According to Kay, more than half the poor in Eng-

land and Wales cannot read and write, while the majority of the remainder know nothing of science, history, geography, music, or drawing, and very little of the Scripture history. In the great mercantile and manufacturing towns, it is true that poor men, if they defer their marriage, and have no extraordinary encumbrances, may improve their condition; but scarcely any facilities are offered for their acquiring the intelligence necessary for the control of passion. The schools in the towns are wretchedly arranged and managed. Many are nothing more than "dame schools," conducted often in cellars or garrets, by poor women, who know how to read, but who often know nothing else. The schools for the peasants are still fewer in number, and inefficient in character; and hence the result, that the English peasantry are more ignorant and demoralized, less capable of helping themselves, and more pauperized, than those of any other country in Europe, if we except Russia, Turkey, South Italy, and some parts of the Austrian Empire. A writer in a recent number of "Household Words," makes some remarkable statements in regard to the ignorance of the English masses:—

"Wherever we turn, ignorance, not always allied to poverty, stares us in the face. If we look in the Gazette, at the list of partnerships dissolved, not a month passes but some unhappy man, rolling perhaps in wealth, but wallowing in ignorance, is put to the *experimentum crucis* of 'his mark.' The number of petty

jurors—in rural districts especially—who can only sign with a cross is enormous. It is not unusual to see parish documents of great local importance defaced with the same humiliating symbol by persons whose office shows them to be not only 'men of mark,' but men of substance. We have printed already specimens of the partial ignorance which passes under the ken of the post-office authorities, and we may venture to assert, that such specimens of penmanship and orthography are not to be matched in any other country in Europe. A housewife in humble life need only turn to the file of her tradesmen's bills to discover hieroglyphics which render them so many arithmetical puzzles. In short, the practical evidences of the low ebb to which the plainest rudiments of education in this country has fallen, are too common to bear repetition. We cannot pass through the streets, we cannot enter a place of public assembly, or ramble in the fields, without the gloomy shadow of Ignorance sweeping over us. The rural population is indeed in a worse plight than the other classes. We quote—with the attestation of our own experience—the following passage from one of a series of articles which have recently appeared in a morning newspaper: 'Taking the adult class of agricultural labourers, it is almost impossible to exaggerate the ignorance in which they live and move and have their being. As they work in the fields, the external world has some hold upon them through the medium of their senses; but to all the higher exercises of intellect they are perfect strangers. You cannot address one of them without being at once painfully struck with the intellectual darkness which enshrouds him. There is in general neither speculation in his eyes nor intelligence in his countenance. The whole expression is more that of an animal than of a man. He is wanting, too, in the erect and independent bearing of a man. When you accost him, if he is not insolent—which he seldom is—he is timid and shrinking, his whole manner showing that he feels himself at a distance from you greater than should separate any two classes of men. He is often doubtful when you address, and suspicious when you question him; he is seemingly oppressed with the interview while it lasts, and obviously relieved when it is over. These are the traits

which I can affirm them to possess as a class, after having come in contact with many hundreds of farm labourers. They belong to a generation for whose intellectual culture little or nothing was done. As a class, they have no amusements beyond the indulgence of sense. In nine cases out of ten, recreation is associated in their minds with nothing higher than sensuality. I have frequently asked clergymen and others, if they often find the adult peasant reading for his own or others' amusement? The invariable answer is, that such a sight is seldom or never witnessed. In the first place, *the great bulk of them cannot read.* In the next, a large proportion of those who can, do so with too much difficulty to admit of the exercise being an amusement to them. Again, few of those who can read with comparative ease, have the taste for doing so. It is but justice to them to say that many of those who cannot read have bitterly regretted, in my hearing, their inability to do so. I shall never forget the tone in which an old woman in Cornwall intimated to me what a comfort it would now be to her could she only read her Bible in her lonely hours.'"

From statistics given by Kay, it is apparent that the proportional amount of crime to population, calculated in two years, 1841 and 1847, was greater in almost all the agricultural counties of England than it was in the mining and manufacturing districts. The peasants of England must be subjected to a singularly demoralizing system to produce so terrible a result. The extreme poverty of the agricultural labourers is the great stimulant to crime of all kinds; but the darkness of ignorance is also a powerful agent. Poverty renders the peasants desperate, and they are too ignorant to see the consequences of crime.

In a former part of this work, it was mentioned that

the miserable cottages in which the peasants are compelled to reside have considerable influence in demoralizing them. This deserves to be fully illustrated. The majority of the cottages have but two small rooms; in one of which husband and wife, young men and young women, boys and girls, and, very often, a married son and his wife all sleep together. Kay says—

"The accounts we receive from all parts of the country show that these miserable cottages are crowded to an extreme, and that the crowding is progressively increasing. People of both sexes, and of all ages, both married and unmarried—parents, brothers, sisters, and strangers—sleep in the same rooms and often in the same beds. One gentlemen tells us of six people of different sexes and ages, two of whom were man and wife, sleeping in the same bed, three with their heads at the top and three with their heads at the foot of the bed. Another tells us of adult uncles and nieces sleeping in the same room close to each other; another, of the uncles and nieces sleeping in the same bed together; another, of adult brothers and sisters sleeping in the same room with a brother and his wife just married; many tell us of adult brothers and sisters sleeping in the same beds; another tells us of rooms so filled with beds that there is no space between them, but that brothers, sisters, and parents crawl over each other half naked in order to get to their respective resting-places; another, of its being common for men and women, not being relations, to undress together in the same room, without any feeling of its being indelicate; another, of cases where women have been delivered in bedrooms crowded with men, young women, and children; and others mention facts of these crowded bedrooms much too horrible to be alluded to. Nor are these solitary instances, but similar reports are given by gentlemen writing in ALL parts of the country."

The young peasants from their earliest years are accustomed to sleep in the same bedrooms with people

of both sexes; and they lose all sense of the indecency of such a life, taking wives before they are twenty years of age to sleep in the same room with their parents. The policy now pursued by the aristocratic landlords, of clearing their estates, tends to crowd the cottages which are allowed to remain, and thus the demoralization of the peasantry is stimulated. Adultery is the very mildest form of the vast amount of crime which it is engendering. Magistrates, clergymen, surgeons, and parish-officers bear witness that cases of incest are increasing in all parts of the country. An eminent writer represents the consequences of the state of the peasant's cottages in England and Wales in the following startling, but unexaggerated terms:—

"A man and woman intermarry, and take a cottage. In eight cases out of ten it is a cottage with but two rooms. For a time, so far as room at least is concerned, this answers their purpose; but they take it, not because it is at the time sufficiently spacious for them, but because they could not procure a more roomy dwelling, even if they desired it. In this they pass with tolerable comfort, considering their notions of what comfort is, the first period of married life; but, by-and-by they have children, and the family increases, until, in the course of a few years, they number, perhaps, from eight to ten individuals. But in all this time there has been no increase to their household accommodation. As at first, so to the very last, there is but the ONE SLEEPING-ROOM. As the family increases, additional beds are crammed into this apartment, until at last it is so filled with them, that there is scarcely room left to move between them. *I have known instances in which they had to crawl over each other to get to their beds.* So long as the children are very young, the only evil connected with this is the physical one arising from crowding so many people together

into what is generally a dingy, frequently a damp, and invariably an ill-ventilated apartment. But years steal on, and the family continues thus bedded together. Some of its members may yet be in their infancy, but others of both sexes have crossed the line of puberty. But there they are, still together in the same room—the father and mother, the sons and the daughters—young men, young women, and children. Cousins, too, of both sexes, are often thrown together into the same room, *and not unfrequently into the same bed.* I have also known of cases in which uncles slept in the same room with their grown-up nieces, and newly-married couples occupied the same chamber with those long married, and with others marriageable but unmarried. A case also came to my notice, already alluded to in connection with another branch of the subject, in which two sisters, who were married on the same day, occupied adjoining rooms in the same hut, with nothing but a thin board partition, which did not reach the ceiling, between the two rooms, and a door in the partition which only partly filled up the doorway. For years back, in these same two rooms, have slept twelve people of both sexes and all ages. Sometimes, when there is but one room, a praiseworthy effort is made for the conservation of decency. But the hanging up of a piece of tattered cloth between the beds, which is generally all that is done in this respect, and even that but seldom, is but a poor set-off to the fact, that a family, which, in common decency, should, as regards sleeping accommodations, be separated at least into three divisions, occupy, night after night, but one and the same chamber. This is a frightful position for them to be in when an infectious or epidemic disease enters their abode. But this, important though it be, is the least important consideration connected with their circumstances. That which is most so, is the effect produced by them upon their habits and morals. In the illicit intercourse to which such a position frequently gives rise, *it is not always that the tie of blood is respected.* Certain it is, that when the relationship is even but one degree removed from that of brother and sister, that tie is frequently overlooked. And when the circumstances do not lead to such horrible consequences, the mind, particularly of the female, is wholly divested

of that sense of delicacy and shame, which, so long as they are preserved, are the chief safeguards of her chastity. She therefore falls an early and an easy prey to the temptations which beset her beyond the immediate circle of her family. People in the other spheres of life are but little aware of the extent to which this precocious demoralization of the female among the lower orders in the country has proceeded. But how could it be otherwise? The philanthropist may exert himself in their behalf, the moralist may inculcate even the worldly advantages of a better course of life, and the minister of religion may warn them of the eternal penalties which they are incurring; but there is an instructor constantly at work, more potent than them all—an instructor in mischief, of which they must get rid ere they can make any real progress in their laudable efforts—and that is, *the single bedchamber in the two-roomed cottage.*"

But such cottages will continue to be the dwellings of the peasantry until the system of lord and serf is abolished, until they can obtain ground of their own, and have no fear of eviction at a moment's notice. It has often been a matter of wonder that there is less discontent and murmuring among the miserable peasants than among the workmen in the manufacturing towns. The reason lies upon the surface. The workmen in the factories are generally more intelligent than the agricultural labourers, and have a keen feeling of their degradation. It requires a certain degree of elevation to render a man discontented. The wallowing pig is satisfied.

We need not be surprised to find that where so much misery prevails crime is frightfully frequent. The "Times" of the 30th of November, 1849, shows the

terrible increase of crime in the last few years in Dorsetshire. The "Times" says—

"We yesterday published, in a very short compass, some grave particulars of the unfortunate county of Dorset. It is not simply the old story of wages inadequate for life, hovels unfit for habitation, and misery and sin alternately claiming our pity and our disgust. This state of things is so normal, and we really believe so immemorial in that notorious county, that we should rather deaden than excite the anxiety of the public by a thrice-told tale. What compels our attention just now is a sudden, rapid, and, we fear, a forced aggravation of these evils, measured by the infallible test of crime. Dorsetshire is fast sinking into a slough of wretchedness, which threatens the peace and morality of the kingdom at large. The total number of convictions, which

"In 1846 was 798, and
"In 1847 was 821, mounted up,
"In 1848, to 950;

"and up to the special general session, last Tuesday, (Dec. 1849,) for less than eleven months of the present year, to the astonishing number of 1193, being at the rate of 1300 for the whole year! Unless something is done to stop this flood of crime, or the tide happily turns of itself, the county will have more than *doubled* its convictions within four years! Nor is it possible for us to take refuge in the thought that the increase is in petty offences. In no respect is it a light thing for a poor creature to be sent to jail, whatever be the offence. He has broken the laws of his country, and forfeited his character. His name and his morals are alike tainted with the jail. He is degraded and corrupted. If his spirit be not crushed, it is exasperated into perpetual hostility to wealth and power. * * *

"It is, then, no light affair that a rural county, the abode of an ancient and respectable aristocracy, somewhat removed from the popular influences of the age, with a population of 175,043 by the late census, should produce in four years near 4000 convictions,

being at the rate of one conviction in that period for every sixty persons, or every twelve householders."

We might express our doubts of the real respectability of the ancient aristocracy of Dorsetshire. They do not injure society in a way of which the laws take notice; but had they nothing to do with the making of the 4000 criminals? In 1834, an English writer estimated that about 120,000 of the people were always in jail. At the present time the number is still greater.

The humane and able author of "Letters on Rural Districts," published in the "Morning Chronicle" of London, thus speaks of the frightful immorality among the agricultural population of Norfolk and Suffolk counties:—

"One species of immorality, which is peculiarly prevalent in Norfolk and Suffolk, is that of bastardy. With the exception of Hereford and Cumberland, there are no counties in which the percentage of bastardy is so high as it is in Norfolk—being there 53.1 per cent. above the average of England and Wales; in Suffolk it is 27 per cent. above, and in Essex 19.1 per cent. below the average. In the two first-named counties, and even in the latter one, though not to the same extent, *there appears to be a perfect want of decency among the people.* 'The immorality of the young women,' said the rector of one parish to me, 'is literally horrible, and I regret to say it is on the increase in a most extraordinary degree. When I first came to the town, the mother of a bastard child used to be ashamed to show herself. The case is now quite altered; no person seems to think any thing at all of it. When I first came to the town, there was no such thing as a common prostitute in it; now there is an enormous number of

them. When I am called upon to see a woman confined with an illegitimate child, I endeavour to impress upon her the enormity of the offence; and there are no cases in which I receive more insult from those I visit than from such persons. They generally say they'll get on as well, after all that's said about it; and if they never do any thing worse than that, they shall get to heaven as well as other people.' Another clergyman stated to me, that he never recollected an instance of his having married a woman who was not either pregnant at the time of her marriage, or had had one or more children before her marriage. Again, a third clergyman told me, that he went to baptize the illegitimate child of one woman, who was thirty-five years of age, and it was absolutely impossible for him to convince her that what she had done was wrong. 'There appears,' said he, 'to be among the lower orders a perfect deadness of all moral feeling upon this subject.' Many of the cases of this kind, which have come under my knowledge, evince such horrible depravity, that I dare not attempt to lay them before the reader. Speaking to the wife of a respectable labourer on the subject, who had seven children, one of whom was then confined with an illegitimate child, she excused her daughter's conduct by saying, 'What was the poor girl to do! The chaps say that they won't marry 'em first, and then the girls give way. I did the same myself with my husband.' There was one case in Cossey, in Norfolk, in which the woman told me, without a blush crimsoning her cheek, that her daughter and self had each had a child by a sweep, who lodged with them, and who promised to marry the daughter. The cottage in which these persons slept consisted of but one room, and there were two other lodgers who occupied beds in the same room; in one of which 'a young woman occasionally slept with the young man she was keeping company with.' The other lodger was an old woman of seventy-four years of age. To such an extent is prostitution carried on in Norwich, that out of the 656 licensed public-houses and beer-shops in the city, there are not less than 220, which are known to the police as common brothels. And, although the authorities have the power of withholding the licenses, nothing is done to put a stop to the frightful vice."

A want of chastity is universal among the female peasants of Wales, arising chiefly from the herding of many persons in the small cottages. In the vicinity of the mines, the average of inhabitants to a house is said to be nearly twelve. The Rev. John Griffith, vicar of Aberdare, says—

"Nothing can be lower, I would say more degrading, than the character in which the women stand relative to the men. The men and the women, married as well as single, live in the same house, *and sleep in the same room.* The men do not hesitate to wash themselves naked before the women; on the other hand, the women do not hesitate to change their under garments before the men. Promiscuous intercourse is most common, is thought of as nothing, and the women do not lose caste by it."

The Welsh are peculiarly exempt from the guilt of great crimes. But petty thefts, lying, cozening, every species of chicanery and drunkenness are common among the agricultural population, and are regarded as matters of course.

Infanticide is practised to a terrible extent in England and Wales. In most of the large provincial towns, "burial clubs" exist. A small sum is paid every year by the parent, and this entitles him to receive from £3 to £5 from the club on the death of the child. Many persons enter their children in several clubs; and, as the burial of the child does not necessarily cost more than £1, or at the most £1 10*s*., the parent realizes a considerable sum after all the expenses are paid. For the sake of this money, it has become common to cause the death

of the children, either by starvation, ill-usage, or poison. No more horrible symptom of moral degradation could be conceived.

"Mr. Chadwick says,* 'officers of these burial societies, relieving officers, and others, whose administrative duties put them in communication with the lowest classes in these districts, (the manufacturing districts,) express their moral conviction of the operation of such bounties to produce instances of the visible neglect of children of which they are witnesses. They often say—You are not treating that child properly, it will not live; *is it in the club?* And the answer corresponds with the impression produced by the sight.

"'Mr. Gardiner, the clerk of the Manchester union, while registering the causes of death, deemed the cause assigned by a labouring man for the death of a child unsatisfactory, and staying to inquire, found that popular rumour assigned the death to wilful starvation. The child (according to a statement of the case) had been entered in at least *ten* burial clubs; *and its parents had had six other children, who only lived from nine to eighteen months respectively.* They had received from several burial clubs twenty pounds for *one* of these children, and they expected at least as much on account of this child. An inquest was held at Mr. Gardiner's instance, when several persons, who had known the deceased, stated that she was a fine fat child shortly after her birth, but that she soon became quite thin, was badly clothed, and seemed as if she did not get a sufficiency of food. . . The jury, having expressed it as their opinion that the evidence of the parents was made up for the occasion and entitled to no credit, returned the following verdict:—Died through want of nourishment, but whether occasioned by a deficiency of food, or by disease of the liver and spine brought on by improper food and drink or otherwise, does not appear.

"'Two similar cases came before Mr. Coppock, the clerk and

* Sanitary Inquiry Report, 1843, p. 64.

superintendent-registrar of the Stockport union, in both of which he prosecuted the parties for murder. In one case, where three children had been poisoned with arsenic, the father was tried with the mother and convicted at Chester, and sentenced to be transported for life, but the mother was acquitted. In the other case, where the judge summed up for a conviction, the accused, the father, was, to the astonishment of every one, acquitted. In this case the body was exhumed after interment, and *arsenic was detected in the stomach.* In consequence of the suspicion raised upon the death on which the accusation was made in the first case, the bodies of two other children were taken up and examined, when *arsenic was found in their stomachs.* In all these cases payments on the deaths of the children were insured from the burial clubs; the cost of the coffin and burial dues would not be more than about one pound, and the allowance from the club is three pounds.

"'It is remarked on these dreadful cases by the superintendent-registrar, *that the children who were boys, and therefore likely to be useful to the parents, were not poisoned;* the female children were the victims. It was the clear opinion of the medical officers that infanticides have been committed in Stockport to obtain the burial money.'"

Such parents must be placed upon a level with the swine that devour their farrow. We are led to doubt whether they could sink much lower in the animal scale; poverty and ignorance seem to have thoroughly quenched the spark of humanity. The author of "Letters on Labour, and the Poor in the Rural Districts," writing of the burial clubs in the eastern counties, says:

"The suspicion that a great deal of 'foul play' exists with respect to these clubs is supported, not only by a comparison of the different rates of mortality, but it is considerably strengthened by the facts proved upon the trial of Mary May. The Rev. Mr. Wilkins, the vicar of Wickes, who was mainly instrumental in

bringing the case before a court of justice, stated to me that, from the time of Mary May coming to live in his parish, he was determined to keep a very strict watch upon her movements, as he had heard that *fourteen of her children had previously died suddenly.*

"A few weeks after her arrival in his parish, she called upon him to request him to bury one of her children. Upon his asking her which of the children it was, she told him that it was Eliza, a fine healthy-looking child of ten years old. Upon his expressing some surprise that she should have died so suddenly, she said, 'Oh, sir, she went off like a snuff; all my other children did so too.' A short time elapsed, and she again waited upon the vicar to request him to bury her brother as soon as he could. His suspicions were aroused, and he endeavoured to postpone the funeral for a few days, in order to enable him to make some inquiries. Not succeeding in obtaining any information which would warrant further delay in burying the corpse, he most reluctantly proceeded in the discharge of his duty.

"About a week after the funeral, Mary May again waited upon him to request him to sign a certificate to the effect that her brother was in perfect health a fortnight before he died, that being the time at which, as it subsequently appeared, she had entered him as nominee in the Harwich Burial Club. Upon inquiring as to the reason of her desiring this certificate, she told him that, unless she got it, she could not get the money for him from the club. This at once supplied the vicar with what appeared to be a motive for 'foul play' on the part of the woman. He accordingly obtained permission to have the body of her brother exhumed; doses of arsenic were detected, and the woman was arrested. With the evidence given upon the trial the reader is, no doubt, perfectly conversant, and it will be unnecessary for me to detail it. She was convicted. Previously to her execution she refused to make any confession, but said, 'If I were to tell all I know, it would give the hangman work for the next twelve months.' Undue weight ought not to be attached to the declaration of such a woman as Mary May; but, coupled with the disclosures that took place upon the trial with respect to some of her neighbours and accomplices, and with the extraordinary rate

of mortality among the clubs, it certainly does appear that the general opinion with respect to the mischievous effects of these societies is not altogether without foundation.

"Although there are not in Essex, at present, any burial clubs in which children are admitted under fourteen years of age as members or nominees, still, as illustrating the evils arising from these clubs, I may state that many persons who are fully conversant with the working of such institutions have stated that they have frequently been shocked by hearing women of the lower classes, when speaking of a neighbour's child, make use of such expressions as, 'Oh, depend upon it, the child'll not live; it's in the burial club.' When speaking to the parents of a child who may be unwell, it is not unfrequently that they say, 'You should do so and so,' or, 'You should not do so and so;' '*You should not treat it in that way; is it in the burial club?*' Instances of the most culpable neglect, if not of graver offences, are continually occurring in districts where clubs exist in which children are admitted. A collector of one of the most extensive burial societies gave it as his opinion, founded upon his experience, that it had become a constant practice to neglect the children for the sake of the allowance from the clubs; and he supported his opinion by several cases which had come under his own observation."

A vast number of other facts, of equally shocking character, have been ascertained. The Rev. J. Clay, chaplain of the Preston House of Correction, in a sanitary report, makes some statements of a nature to startle:—

"It appears, on the unimpeachable authority of a burial-club official, that '*hired nurses speculate on the lives of infants committed to their care, by entering them in burial clubs;*' that 'two young women proposed to enter a child into his club, and to pay the weekly premium alternately. Upon inquiring as to the relation subsisting between the two young women and the child, he learned that the infant was placed at nurse with the mother of one of

these young women.' The wife of a clergymen told me that, visiting a poor district just when a child's death had occurred, instead of hearing from the neighbours the language of sympathy for the bereaved parent, she was shocked by such observations as—'Ah! it's a fine thing for the mother, the child's in two clubs!'

"As regards one town, I possess some evidence of the amount of burial-club membership and of infant mortality, which I beg to lay before you. The reports of this town refer to 1846, when the population of the town amounted to about 61,000. I do not name the town, because, as no actual burial-club murders are known to have been committed in it, and as such clubs are not more patronized there than in other places, it is, perhaps, not fair to hold it up to particular animadversion; indeed, as to its general character, this very town need not fear comparison with any other. Now this place, with its sixty-one thousand people of all classes and ages, maintains at least eleven burial clubs, the members of which amount in the aggregate to nearly fifty-two thousand; nor are these all. Sick clubs, remember, act as burial clubs. Of these there are twelve or fourteen in the town, mustering altogether, probably, two thousand members. Here, then, we have good data for comparing population with '*death lists*;' but it will be necessary, in making the comparison, to deduct from the population all that part of it which has nothing to do with these clubs, viz. all infants under two months old, and all persons of unsound health, (both of these classes being excluded by the club rules;) all those also of the working classes, whose sound intelligence and feeling lead them to abhor burial-club temptations; and all the better classes, to whom five or twenty pounds offer no consolation for the death of a child. On the hypothesis that these deductions will amount to one-sixth of the entire population, it results that the *death lists* are more numerous by far than the entire mass—old, young, and infants—which support them; and, according to the statement of a leading death-list officer, *three-fourths* of the names on these catalogues of the doomed are the names of children. Now, if this be the truth—and I believe it is—hundreds, if not thousands of children must be entered each into *four*, *five*, or even *twelve* clubs, their chances of life

diminishing, of course, in proportion to the frequency with which they are entered. Lest you should imagine that such excessive addiction to burial clubs is only to be found in one place, I furnish you with a report for 1846, of a single club, which then boasted thirty-four thousand one hundred members, *the entire population of the town to which it belongs having been, in* 1841, *little more than thirty-six thousand!*"

The authorities from whom these statements are derived are of the highest respectability; they bear witness to a state of affairs scarcely to be conceived by people of other civilized countries. Hundreds of thousands of human beings seem to be driven into an awful abyss of crime and misery by the iron rule of the aristocracy—an abyss where mothers forget maternal feelings, where marriage vows are scoffed, and where the momentary gratification of brutal passions is alone esteemed. There, indeed, there is no fear of God, and heathenism spreads its upas shade to poison and destroy.

The only amusement which the English poor possess in many parts of the country, is to visit taverns. In the towns the "gin-palaces" and the beer-houses are very numerous; and whenever the poor have leisure, these places are thronged by drunken men and abandoned women. In all the rural districts there is a frightful amount of drunkenness. British legislation has increased the number of these hot-beds of crime and pauperism.

"In the beginning of the revolutionary war the duties on malt were *augmented*, and in 1825 the duties on spirits were *decreased*.

It was thus that whisky was substituted for ale as the beverage of the Scotch, and that gin and brandy began to be generally drunk by the English poor.

"The consumption of spirits immediately increased in a tremendous proportion. From 4,132,263 gallons, the consumption in 1825, it rose in one year to 8,888,648 gallons; that is, the consumption was *in one year* more than *doubled* by the change; and from that period, with the exception of the year next following, viz. 1827, the consumption has been progressively augmenting.

"Since that time the noted beer-shop act has been passed. By that act, any one was enabled to obtain a license to enable him to sell beer, whether the person desirous of doing so was a person of respectable character or not.

"But this was the least of the evils which were effected by that act. A clause, which was still more injurious, was that which prescribed that the liquor *must be drunk upon the premises of the beer-house*, i. e. either in the beer-house or on a bench just outside the door.

"This has the effect in many cases, where the poor would otherwise take the beer home to their own cottages, of forcing the young men who wish to have a little to drink, to sit down and take it in the society of the worst people of the neighbourhood, who always, as a matter of course, spend their leisure in the tavern. I am convinced that nothing can be more injurious in its effects upon the poor than this clause. It may be said to *force* the honest labourers into the society and companionship of the most depraved, and so necessarily to demoralise the young and honest labourer.

"The following is the number of gallons of *native* proof spirits on which duty was paid for home consumption in the United Kingdom, in the undermentioned years:—

| Years. | Gallons. |
|---|---|
| 1843 | 18,841,890 |
| 1844 | 20,608,525 |
| 1845 | 23,122,588 |
| 1846 | 24,106,697 |

"To the above must be added the number of gallons of foreign and colonial spirits retained for home consumption, as follows:—

| Years. | No. of Gallons of Foreign, &c. Spirits. | No. of Gallons of Home and Foreign Spirits consumed in the United Kingdom. |
|---|---|---|
| 1843 | 3,161,957 | 22,026,289 |
| 1844 | 3,242,606 | 22,042,905 |
| 1845 | 3,549,889 | 26,672,477 |
| 1846 | 4,252,237 | 28,360,934 |

"From the above statistics it appears that the consumption of spirits in the United Kingdom is increasing much more rapidly than the population!

"The number of licenses granted to retailers of spirits or beer amounted, in 1845, to 237,345; that is, there was to be found, in 1845, a retailer of beer or spirits in every 115 of the population! Of the beer licenses, 68,086 were for dwellings rated under £20 per annum, and 35,340 were licenses for premises rated under £10 per annum! This shows how large a proportion of the beer-shops are situated in the poorest districts, for the use of the poorest classes.*

There is a section of London, which in 1847 had 2000 inhabitants, one butcher's shop, two bakers' shops, and seventeen beer-houses. The total cost of the spirits and beer consumed in the United Kingdom was, in 1843, estimated at £65,000,000, a sum greater, by several millions, than the whole revenue of the government. The inimitable Dickens has given us a vivid sketch of a London gin-palace and its attendants. He says—

"The extensive scale on which these places are established,

* Kay.

and the ostentatious manner in which the business of even the smallest among them is divided into branches, is most amusing. A handsome plate of ground glass in one door directs you 'To the Counting-house;' another to the 'Bottle Department;' a third to the 'Wholesale Department;' a fourth to the 'Wine Promenade;' and so forth, until we are in daily expectation of meeting with a 'Brandy Bell,' or a 'Whisky Entrance.' Then ingenuity is exhausted in devising attractive titles for the different descriptions of gin; and the dram-drinking portion of the community, as they gaze upon the gigantic black and white announcements, which are only to be equalled in size by the figures beneath them, are left in a state of pleasing hesitation between 'The Cream of the Valley,' 'The Out and Out,' 'The No Mistake,' 'The Good for Mixing,' 'The real Knock-me-down,' 'The celebrated Butter Gin,' 'The regular Flare-up,' and a dozen other equally inviting and wholesome *liqueurs*. Although places of this description are to be met with in every second street, they are invariably numerous and splendid in precise proportion to the dirt and poverty of the surrounding neighbourhood. The gin-shops in and near Drury-lane, Holborn, St. Giles's, Covent-garden, and Clare-market, are the handsomest in London. There is more of filth and squalid misery near those great thoroughfares than in any part of this mighty city.

"We will endeavour to sketch the bar of a large gin-shop, and its ordinary customers, for the edification of such of our readers as may not have had opportunities of observing such scenes; and on the chance of finding one well suited to our purpose we will make for Drury-lane, through the narrow streets and dirty courts which divide it from Oxford street, and that classical spot adjoining the brewery at the bottom of Tottenham-court-road, best known to the initiated as the 'Rookery.'

"The filthy and miserable appearance of this part of London can hardly be imagined by those (and there are many such) who have not witnessed it. Wretched houses with broken windows patched with rags and paper, every room let out to a different family, and in many instances to two or even three; fruit and 'sweet-stuff' manufacturers in the cellars, barbers and red-her-

ring venders in the front parlours, and cobblers in the back; a bird-fancier in the first floor, three families on the second, starvation in the attics, Irishmen in the passage; a 'musician' in the front kitchen, and a charwoman and five hungry children in the back one—filth everywhere—a gutter before the houses and a drain behind them—clothes drying and slops emptying from the windows; girls of fourteen or fifteen with matted hair, walking about barefooted, and in white great-coats, almost their only covering; boys of all ages, in coats of all sizes and no coats at all; men and women, in every variety of scanty and dirty apparel, lounging, scolding, drinking, smoking, squabbling, fighting, and swearing.

"You turn the corner, what a change! All is light and brilliancy. The hum of many voices issues from that splendid gin-shop which forms the commencement of the two streets opposite, and the gay building with the fantastically ornamented parapet, the illuminated clock, the plate-glass windows surrounded by stucco rosettes, and its profusion of gas-lights in richly gilt burners, is perfectly dazzling when contrasted with the darkness and dirt we have just left. The interior is even gayer than the exterior. A bar of French polished mahogany, elegantly carved, extends the whole width of the place; and there are two side-aisles of great casks, painted green and gold, enclosed within a light brass rail, and bearing such inscriptions as 'Old Tom, 549;' 'Young Tom, 360;' 'Samson, 1421.' Beyond the bar is a lofty and spacious saloon, full of the same enticing vessels, with a gallery running round it, equally well furnished. On the counter, in addition to the usual spirit apparatus, are two or three little baskets of cakes and biscuits, which are carefully secured at the top with wicker-work, to prevent their contents being unlawfully abstracted. Behind it are two showily-dressed damsels with large necklaces, dispensing the spirits and 'compounds.' They are assisted by the ostensible proprietor of the concern, a stout coarse fellow in a fur cap, put on very much on one side, to give him a knowing air, and display his sandy whiskers to the best advantage.

"It is growing late, and the throng of men, women, and chil-

dren, who have been constantly going in and out, dwindles down to two or three occasional stragglers—cold, wretched-looking creatures, in the last stage of emaciation and disease. The knot of Irish labourers at the lower end of the place, who have been alternately shaking hands with, and threatening the life of, each other for the last hour, become furious in their disputes, and finding it impossible to silence one man, who is particularly anxious to adjust the difference, they resort to the infallible expedient of knocking him down and jumping on him afterward. The man in the fur cap and the potboy rush out; a scene of riot and confusion ensues; half the Irishmen get shut out, and the other half get shut in; the potboy is knocked among the tubs in no time; the landlord hits everybody, and everybody hits the landlord; the barmaids scream; the police come in; and the rest is a confused mixture of arms, legs, staves, torn coats, shouting, and struggling. Some of the party are borne off to the station-house, and the remainder slink home to beat their wives for complaining, and kick the children for daring to be hungry."

The neglected and frightfully wretched condition of a great part of the juvenile population in the British towns has frequently excited the attention of philanthropic Englishmen. On the 6th of June, 1848, Lord Ashley made a speech on juvenile destitution in the House of Commons, in which he drew an awful picture of misery and degradation. He showed that in the midst of London there is a large and continually increasing number of lawless persons, forming a separate class, having pursuits, interests, manners, and customs of their own. These are quite independent of the number of mere pauper children who crowd the streets of London, and who never attend a school. The law-

less class were estimated by Lord Ashley to number thirty thousand.

"Of 1600 who were examined, 162 confessed that they had been in prison, not merely once, or even twice, but some of them several times; 116 had run away from their homes; 170 slept in the 'lodging houses;' 253 had lived altogether by beggary; 216 had neither shoes nor stockings; 280 had no hat or cap, or covering for the head; 101 had no linen; 249 had never slept in a bed; many had no recollection of ever having been in a bed; 68 were the children of convicts.

"In 1847 it was found that of 4000 examined, 400 confessed that they had been in prison, 660 lived by beggary, 178 were the children of convicts, and 800 had lost one or both their parents. Now, what was the employment of these people? They might be classed as street-sweepers; vendors of lucifer matches, oranges, cigars, tapes, and ballads; they held horses, ran errands, jobbed for 'dealers in marine stores,' that being the euphonious term for receivers of stolen goods—an influential race in the metropolis, but for whose agency a very large proportion of juvenile crime would be extinguished. It might be asked, how did the large number who never slept in bed pass the night? In all manner of places: under dry arches of bridges and viaducts, under porticos, sheds, carts in outhouses, sawpits, or staircases, or in the open air, and some in lodging-houses. Curious, indeed, was their mode of life. One boy, during the inclement period of 1847, passed the greater part of his nights in the large iron roller in the Regent's Park. He climbed over the railings, and crept to the roller, where he lay in comparative security.

"Lord Ashley says, 'many of them were living in the dry arches of houses not finished, inaccessible except by an aperture, only large enough to admit the body of a man. When a lantern was thrust in, six or eight, ten or twelve people might be found lying together. Of those whom we found thus lodged, we invited a great number to come the following day, and there an

examination was instituted. The number examined was 33. Their ages varied from 12 to 18, and some were younger. 24 had no parents, 6 had one, 3 had stepmothers, 20 had no shirts, 9 no shoes, 12 had been once in prison, 3 twice, 3 four times, 1 eight times, and 1 (only 14 years old) twelve times. The physical condition of these children was exceedingly bad; they were a prey to vermin, they were troubled with itch, they were begrimed with dirt, not a few were suffering from sickness, and two or three days afterward several died from disease and the effects of starvation. I privately examined eight or ten. I was anxious to obtain from them the truth. I examined them separately, taking them into a room alone. I said, "I am going to ask you a variety of questions, to which I trust you will give me true answers, and I will undertake to answer any question you may put." They thought that a fair bargain. I put to several of them the question, "How often have you slept in a bed during the last three years?" One said, perhaps twelve times, another three times, another could not remember that he ever had. I asked them, how they passed the night in winter. They said, "We lie eight or ten together, to keep ourselves warm." I entered on the subject of their employments and modes of living. They fairly confessed they had no means of subsistence but begging and stealing. The only way of earning a penny in a legitimate way was by picking up old bones. But they fairly acknowledged for themselves and others scattered over the town, with whom they professed themselves acquainted, that they had not and could not have any other means of subsistence than by begging and stealing. A large proportion of these young persons were at a most dangerous age for society. What was the moral condition of those persons? A large proportion of them (it was no fault of theirs) did not recognise the distinctive rights of *meum* and *tuum*. Property appeared to them to be only the aggregate of plunder. They held that every thing which was possessed was common stock; that he who got most was the cleverest fellow, and that every one had a right to abstract from that stock what he could by his own ingenuity. Was it matter of surprise that they entertained those notions, which were instilled into

their minds from the time they were able to creep on all fours—that not only did they disregard all the rights of property, but gloried in doing so, unless they thought the avowal would bring them within the grasp of the law. To illustrate their low state of morality, and to show how utterly shameless they were in speaking on these subjects, I would mention what had passed at a ragged school to which fourteen or fifteen boys, having presented themselves on a Sunday evening, were admitted as they came. They sat down, and the lesson proceeded. The clock struck eight. They all rose with the exception of one little boy. The master took him by the arm and said, "You must remain; the lesson is not over." The reply was, "We must go to business." The master inquired what business? "We must all go to catch them as they come out of the chapels." It was necessary for them, according to the remark of this boy, to go at a certain time in pursuit of their calling. They had no remorse or shame, in making the avowal, because they believed that there were no other means of saving themselves from starvation. I recollect a very graphic remark made by one of those children in perfect simplicity, but which yet showed the horrors of their position. The master had been pointing out to him the terrors of punishment in after-life. The remark of the boy was, "That may be so, but I don't think it can be any worse than this world has been to me." Such was the condition of hundreds and thousands.'"

A large number of the depraved children live in what are called the "lodging-houses." Most Americans have heard of the "Old Brewery" at the Five Points in New York city, where more than two hundred persons of all ages and sexes were crowded together. Such lodging-houses as this, (which fortunately has been destroyed,) are common in London and the provincial towns of Great Britain. Mr. Mayhew,

in his "London Labour and the London Poor," has given us very full information concerning them. He obtained much of it from one who had passed some time among the dens of infamy. He says of these lodging-houses—

"'They have generally a spacious, though often ill-ventilated kitchen, the dirty, dilapidated walls of which are hung with prints, while a shelf or two are generally, though barely, furnished with crockery and kitchen utensils. In some places knives and forks are not provided, unless a penny is left with the "deputy," or manager, till they are returned. A brush of any kind is a stranger, and a looking-glass would be a miracle. The average number of nightly lodgers is in winter seventy, in the summer (when many visit the provinces) from forty to forty-five. The general charge is, if two sleep together, 3*d.* per night, or 4*d.* for a single bed. In either case, it is by no means unusual to find eighteen or twenty in one small room, the heat and horrid smell from which are insufferable; and, where there are young children, the staircases are the lodgment of every kind of filth and abomination. In some houses there are rooms for families, where, on a rickety machine, which they dignify by the name of a bedstead, may be found the man, his wife, and a son or daughter, perhaps eighteen years of age; while the younger children, aged from seven to fourteen, sleep on the floor. If they have linen, they take it off to escape vermin, and rise naked, one by one, or sometimes brother and sister together. This is no ideal picture; the subject is too capable of being authenticated to need any meaningless or dishonest assistance called "allowable exaggeration." The amiable and deservedly popular minister of a district church, built among lodging-houses, has stated that he has found twenty-nine human beings in one apartment; and that having with difficulty knelt down between two beds to pray with a dying woman, his legs became so jammed that he could hardly get up again.

"'Out of some fourscore such habitations,' continues my informant, 'I have only found *two* which had any sort of garden; and, I am

happy to add, that in neither of these two was there a single case of cholera. In the others, however, the pestilence raged with terrible fury.'"

There are other lodging-houses still lower in character than those described above, and where there is a total absence of cleanliness and decency. A man who had slept in these places, gave the following account to Mr. Mayhew:—

"He had slept in rooms so crammed with sleepers—he believed there were thirty where twelve would have been a proper number—that their breaths in the dead of night and in the unventilated chamber, rose (I use his own words) 'in one foul, choking steam of stench.' This was the case most frequently a day or two prior to Greenwich Fair or Epsom Races, when the congregation of the wandering classes, who are the supporters of the low lodging-houses, was the thickest. It was not only that two or even three persons jammed themselves into a bed not too large for one full-sized man; but between the beds—and their partition one from another admitted little more than the passage of a lodger—were placed shakedowns, or temporary accommodation for nightly slumber. In the better lodging-houses the shakedowns are small palliasses or mattrasses; in the worst they are bundles of rags of any kind; but loose straw is used only in the country for shakedowns. Our informant saw a traveller, who had arrived late, eye his shakedown in one of the worst houses with any thing but a pleased expression of countenance; and a surly deputy, observing this, told the customer he had his choice, 'which,' the deputy added, 'is not as all men has, or I shouldn't have been waiting here on you. But you has your choice, I tell you;—sleep there on that shakedown, or turn out and be ——; that's fair.' At some of the busiest periods, numbers sleep on the kitchen floor, all huddled together, men and women, (when indecencies are common enough,) and without bedding or any thing but their scanty clothes to soften

the hardness of the stone or brick floor. A penny is saved to the lodger by this means. More than two hundred have been accommodated in this way in a large house. The Irish, in harvest-time, very often resort to this mode of passing the night.

"I heard from several parties, of the surprise, and even fear or horror, with which a decent mechanic—more especially if he were accompanied by his wife—regarded one of these foul dens, when destitution had driven him there for the first time in his life. Sometimes such a man was seen to leave the place abruptly, though perhaps he had prepaid his last half-penny for the refreshment of a night's repose. Sometimes he was seized with sickness. I heard also from some educated persons who had 'seen better days,' of the disgust with themselves and with the world, which they felt on first entering such places. 'And I have some reason to believe,' said one man, 'that a person, once well off, who has sunk into the very depths of poverty, often makes his first appearance in one of the worst of those places. Perhaps it is because he keeps away from them as long as he can, and then, in a sort of desperation fit, goes into the cheapest he can meet with; or if he knows it's a vile place, he very likely says to himself—as I did—"I may as well know the worst at once."'

"Another man, who had moved in good society, said, when asked about his resorting to a low lodging-house: 'When a man's lost caste in society, he may as well go the whole hog, bristles and all, and a low lodging-house is the entire pig.'

"Notwithstanding many abominations, I am assured that the lodgers, in even the worst of these habitations, for the most part, sleep soundly. But they have, in all probability, been out in the open air the whole of the day, and all of them may go to their couches, after having walked, perhaps, many miles, exceedingly fatigued, and some of them half drunk. 'Why, in course, sir,' said a 'traveller,' whom I spoke to on this subject, 'if you is in a country town or village, where there's only one lodging-house, perhaps, and that a bad one—an old hand can always suit hisself in London—you *must* get half drunk, or your money for your bed is wasted. There's so much rest owing to you, after a hard day; and bugs and bad air'll prevent its being paid, if you don't lay in

some stock of beer, or liquor of some sort, to sleep on. It's a duty you owes yourself; but, if you haven't the browns, why, then, in course, you can't pay it.' I have before remarked, and, indeed, have given instances, of the odd and sometimes original manner in which an intelligent patterer, for example, will express himself.

"The information I obtained in the course of this inquiry into the condition of low lodging-houses, afforded a most ample corroboration of the truth of a remark I have more than once found it necessary to make before—that persons of the vagrant class will sacrifice almost any thing for warmth, not to say heat. Otherwise, to sleep, or even sit, in some of the apartments of these establishments would be intolerable.

"From the frequent state of weariness to which I have alluded, there is generally less conversation among the frequenters of the low lodging-houses than might be expected. Some are busy cooking, some (in the better houses) are reading, many are drowsy and nodding, and many are smoking. In perhaps a dozen places of the worst and filthiest class, indeed, smoking is permitted even in the sleeping-rooms; but it is far less common than it was even half-a-dozen years back, and becomes still less common yearly. Notwithstanding so dangerous a practice, fires are and have been very unfrequent in these places. There is always some one awake, which is one reason. The lack of conversation, I ought to add, and the weariness and drowsiness, are less observable in the lodging-houses patronized by thieves and women of abandoned character, whose lives are comparatively idle, and whose labour a mere nothing. In their houses, if their conversation be at all general, it is often of the most unclean character. At other times it is carried on in groups, with abundance of whispers, shrugs, and slang, by the members of the respective schools of thieves or lurkers."

* * * * * * * *

"The licentiousness of the frequenters, and more especially the juvenile frequenters, of the low lodging-houses, must be even more briefly alluded to. In some of these establishments, men and women, boys and girls,—but perhaps in no case, or in very rare cases, unless they are themselves consenting parties, herd together promiscuously. The information which I have given from a reve-

rend informant indicates the nature of the proceedings, when the sexes are herded indiscriminately, and it is impossible to present to the reader, in full particularity, the records of the vice practised.

"Boys have boastfully carried on loud conversations, and from distant parts of the room, of their triumphs over the virtue of girls, and girls have laughed at and encouraged the recital. Three, four, five, six, and even more boys and girls have been packed, head and feet, into one small bed; some of them perhaps never met before. On such occasions any clothing seems often enough to be regarded as merely an encumbrance. Sometimes there are loud quarrels and revilings from the jealousy of boys and girls, and more especially of girls whose 'chaps' have deserted or been inveigled from them. At others, there is an amicable interchange of partners, and next day a resumption of their former companionship. One girl, then fifteen or sixteen, who had been leading this vicious kind of life for nearly three years, and had been repeatedly in prison, and twice in hospitals—and who expressed a strong desire to 'get out of the life' by emigration—said: 'Whatever that's bad and wicked, that any one can fancy could be done in such places among boys and girls that's never been taught, or won't be taught, better, *is* done, and night after night.' In these haunts of low iniquity, or rather in the room into which the children are put, there are seldom persons above twenty. The young lodgers in such places live by thieving and pocket-picking, or by prostitution. The charge for a night's lodging is generally 2*d*., but smaller children have often been admitted for 1*d*. If a boy or girl resort to one of these dens at night without the means of defraying the charge for accommodation, the 'mot of the ken' (mistress of the house) will pack them off, telling them plainly that it will be no use their returning until they have stolen something worth 2*d*. If a boy or girl do not return in the evening, and have not been heard to express their intention of going elsewhere, the first conclusion arrived at by their mates is that they have 'got into trouble,' (prison.)

"The indiscriminate admixture of the sexes among adults, in many of these places, is another evil. Even in some houses con-

sidered of the better sort, men and women, husbands and wives, old and young, strangers and acquaintances, sleep in the same apartment, and if they choose, in the same bed. Any remonstrance at some act of gross depravity, or impropriety, on the part of a woman not so utterly hardened as the others, is met with abuse and derision. One man who described these scenes to me, and had long witnessed them, said that almost the only women who ever hid their faces or manifested dislike of the proceedings they could not but notice, (as far as he saw,) were poor Irishwomen, generally those who live by begging: 'But for all that,' the man added, 'an Irishman or Irishwoman of that sort will sleep anywhere, in any mess, to save a halfpenny, though they may have often a few shillings, or a good many, hidden about them.'"

The recent report of Captain Hays, "on the operation of the Common Lodging-house Act," presents some appalling facts:—

"Up to the end of February, it was ascertained that 3100 persons, mostly Irishmen, in the very heart of the metropolis, lodged every night, 84,000 individuals in 3712 rooms. The instances enumerated are heart sickening. In a small room in Rosemary lane, near the Tower, fourteen adults were sleeping on the floor without any partition or regard to decency. In an apartment in Church lane, St. Giles, not fifteen feet square, were thirty-seven women and children, all huddled together on the floor. There are thousands of similar cases. The eastern portion of London, comprising Whitechapel, Spitalfields, and Mile-end—an unknown land to all of the decent classes—is filled with a swarming population of above 300,000 beggars, costermongers, thieves, ragsellers, Jews, and the like. A single court is a fair example of this whole district. It contains eight houses of two rooms each. Three hundred persons—men, women, and children—live there. There is only one place of convenience; and one hydrant, which is served half an hour each day. The condition of this court may be ima-

gined; it is too filthy to describe. Decayed matter, stagnant water, refuse fish, vegetables, broken baskets, dead cats, dogs, and rats, are strewed everywhere around. The prices of various kinds of provision in these neighbourhoods give a forcible notion of the condition of the population. You can purchase for a halfpenny fish or meat enough for a dinner.

"In this neighbourhood is Rag Fair. It is worth a visit. Thousands of persons are assembled in the streets, which are so thickly covered with merchandise that it is difficult to step along without treading on heaps of gowns, shawls, bonnets, shoes, and articles of men's attire. There is no conceivable article of dress that may not be purchased here. It is not without danger that one even visits the place at noonday. You are in the midst of the refuse of all London,—of a whole race, whose chief employment is to commit depredations upon property, and whose lives are spent in the midst of a squalor, filth, deprivation and degradation, which the whole world cannot probably parallel. One of the London missionaries says—'Persons who are accustomed to run up heavy bills at the shops of fashionable tailors and milliners will scarcely believe the sums for which the poor are able to purchase the same kind of articles. I have recently clothed a man and woman, both decently, for the sum of nine shillings. There is as great a variety of articles in pattern, shape, and size, as could be found in any draper's shop in London. The mother may go to *Rag Fair*, with the whole of her family, both boys and girls—yes, and her husband, too—and for a very few shillings deck them out from top to toe. I have no doubt that a man and his wife, and five or six children, with £1 would purchase for themselves an entire change. This may appear an exaggeration; but I actually overheard a conversation, in which two women were trying to bargain for a child's frock; the sum asked was 1½*d.*, and the sum offered was 1*d.*, and they parted on the difference.'

"The following is a bill delivered by a dealer to one of the missionaries, who was requested to supply a suit of clothes for a man and woman whom he had persuaded to get married several years after the right time:—

| | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|
| A full linen-fronted shirt, very elegant | 0 | 6 |
| A pair of warm worsted stockings | 0 | 1 |
| A pair of light-coloured trousers | 0 | 6 |
| A black cloth waistcoat | 0 | 3 |
| A pair of white cotton braces | 0 | 1 |
| A pair of low shoes | 0 | 1 |
| A black silk velvet stock | 0 | 1 |
| A black beaver, fly-fronted, double-breasted paletot coat, lined with silk, a very superior article | 1 | 6 |
| A cloth cap, bound with a figured band | 0 | 1 |
| A pair of black cloth gloves | 0 | 1 |
| | 3 | 3 |

"The man had been educated, and could speak no fewer than five languages; by profession he was, however, nothing but a dust-hill raker.

"The bill delivered for the bride's costume is as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A shift | 0 | 1 |
| A pair of stays | 0 | 2 |
| A flannel petticoat | 0 | 4 |
| A black Orleans ditto | 0 | 4 |
| A pair of white cotton stockings | 0 | 1 |
| A very good light-coloured cotton gown | 0 | 10 |
| A pair of single-soled slippers, with spring heels | 0 | 2 |
| A double-dyed bonnet, including a neat cap | 0 | 2 |
| A pair of white cotton gloves | 0 | 1 |
| A lady's green silk paletot, lined with crimson silk, trimmed with black | 0 | 10 |
| | 3 | 1" |

Throughout the country there are low lodging-houses, which do not differ much in character from those of London. In all of them the most disgusting immorality is practised to an extent scarcely conceivable by those who do not visit such dens of vice and misery.

The story of the Jew Fagan, and his felonious operations, in Dickens's Oliver Twist, is a true representation of a most extensive business in London. There are a large number of notorious receivers of stolen goods. Some of them keep a number of boys, who are instructed in stealing, and beaten severely when unsuccessful. Mayhew mentions one notorious case in George-yard. A wooden-legged Welshman, named Hughes, and commonly called Taff, was the miscreant. Two little boys were his chief agents in stealing, and when they did not obtain any thing, he would take the strap off his wooden leg, and beat them through the nakedness of their rags. He boarded and lodged about a dozen Chelsea and Greenwich pensioners. These he followed and watched closely until they were paid. Then, after they had settled with him, he would make them drunk and rob them of the few shillings they had left.

The brutal treatment of servants, which we have already touched, drives many of them to the low lodging-houses, and to the commission of crime. In the following narrative, which a girl communicated to Mr. Mayhew, we have an illustration of this assertion, as well as some awful disclosures in regard to "life among the lowly:"—

"'I am an orphan. When I was ten I was sent to service as a maid of all-work, in a small tradesman's family. It was a hard place, and my mistress used me very cruelly, beating me often. When I had been in place three weeks, my mother died; my

father having died twelve years before. I stood my mistress's ill-treatment about six months. She beat me with sticks as well as with her hands. I was black and blue, and at last I ran away. I got to Mrs. ——, a low lodging-house. I didn't know before that there was such a place. I heard of it from some girls at the Glasshouse, (baths and wash-houses,) where I went for shelter. I went with them to have a halfpenny worth of coffee, and they took me to the lodging-house. I then had three shillings, and stayed about a month, and did nothing wrong, living on the three shillings and what I pawned my clothes for, as I got some pretty good things away with me. In the lodging-house I saw nothing but what was bad, and heard nothing but what was bad. I was laughed at, and was told to swear. They said, 'Look at her for a d—— modest fool'—sometimes worse than that, until by degrees I got to be as bad as they were. During this time I used to see boys and girls from ten to twelve years old sleeping together, but understood nothing wrong. I had never heard of such places before I ran away. I can neither read nor write. My mother was a good woman, and I wish I'd had her to run away to. I saw things between almost children that I can't describe to you—very often I saw them, and that shocked me. At the month's end, when I was beat out, I met with a young man of fifteen—I myself was going on to twelve years old—and he persuaded me to take up with him. I stayed with him three months in the same lodging-house, living with him as his wife, though we were mere children, and being true to him. At the three months' end he was taken up for picking pockets, and got six months. I was sorry, for he was kind to me; though I was made ill through him; so I broke some windows in St. Paul's churchyard to get into prison to get cured. I had a month in the Compter, and came out well. I was scolded very much in the Compter, on account of the state I was in, being so young. I had 2*s.* 6*d.* given to me when I came out, and was forced to go into the streets for a living. I continued walking the streets for three years, sometimes making a good deal of money, sometimes none, feasting one day and starving the next. The bigger girls could persuade me to do any thing they liked with my money. I was never happy

all the time, but I could get no character, and could not get out of the life. I lodged all this time at a lodging-house in Kent-street. They were all thieves and bad girls. I have known between three and four dozen boys and girls sleep in one room. The beds were horrid filthy and full of vermin. There was very wicked carryings on. The boys, if any difference, was the worst. We lay packed, on a full night, a dozen boys and girls squeedged into one bed. That was very often the case—some at the foot and some at the top—boys and girls all mixed. I can't go into all the particulars, but whatever could take place in words or acts between boys and girls did take place, and in the midst of the others. I am sorry to say I took part in these bad ways myself, but I wasn't so bad as some of the others. There was only a candle burning all night, but in summer it was light great part of the night. Some boys and girls slept without any clothes, and would dance about the room that way. I have seen them, and, wicked as I was, felt ashamed. I have seen two dozen capering about the room that way; some mere children, the boys generally the youngest. * * * There were no men or women present. There were often fights. The deputy never interfered. This is carried on just the same as ever to this day, and is the same every night. I have heard young girls shout out to one another how often they had been obliged to go to the hospital, or the infirmary, or the workhouse. There was a great deal of boasting about what the boys and girls had stolen during the day. I have known boys and girls change their 'partners,' just for a night. At three years' end I stole a piece of beef from a butcher. I did it to get into prison. I was sick of the life I was leading, and didn't know how to get out of it. I had a month for stealing. When I got out I passed two days and a night in the streets doing nothing wrong, and then went and threatened to break Messrs. ——'s windows again. I did that to get into prison again; for when I lay quiet of a night in prison I thought things over, and considered what a shocking life I was leading, and how my health might be ruined completely, and I thought I would stick to prison rather than go back to such a life. I got six months for threatening. When I got out I broke a lamp next

morning for the same purpose, and had a fortnight. That was the last time I was in prison. I have since been leading the same life as I told you of for the three years, and lodging at the same houses, and seeing the same goings on. I hate such a life now more than ever. I am willing to do any work that I can in washing and cleaning. I can do a little at my needle. I could do hard work, for I have good health. I used to wash and clean in prison, and always behaved myself there. At the house where I am it is 3*d.* a night; but at Mrs. ——'s it is 1*d.* and 2*d.* a night, and just the same goings on. Many a girl—nearly all of them—goes out into the streets from this penny and twopenny house, to get money for their favourite boys by prostitution. If the girl can not get money she must steal something, or will be beaten by her 'chap' when she comes home. I have seen them beaten, often kicked and beaten until they were blind from bloodshot, and their teeth knocked out with kicks from boots as the girl lays on the ground. The boys, in their turn, are out thieving all day, and the lodging-house keeper will buy any stolen provisions of them, and sell them to the lodgers. I never saw the police in the house. If a boy comes to the house on a night without money or sawney, or something to sell to the lodgers, a handkerchief or something of that kind, he is not admitted, but told very plainly, 'Go thieve it, then.' Girls are treated just the same. Anybody may call in the daytime at this house and have a halfpenny worth of coffee and sit any length of time until evening. I have seen three dozen sitting there that way, all thieves and bad girls. There are no chairs, and only one form in front of the fire, on which a dozen can sit. The others sit on the floor all about the room, as near the fire as they can. Bad language goes on during the day, as I told you it did during the night, and indecencies too, but nothing like so bad as at night. They talk about where there is good places to go and thieve. The missioners call sometimes, but they're laughed at often when they're talking, and always before the door's closed on them. If a decent girl goes there to get a ha'porth of coffee, seeing the board over the door, she is always shocked. Many a poor girl has been ruined in this house since I was, and boys have boasted about it. I never knew boy or girl do

good, once get used there. Get used there, indeed, and you are life-ruined. I was an only child, and haven't a friend in the world. I have heard several girls say how they would like to get out of the life, and out of the place. From those I know, I think that cruel parents and mistresses cause many to be driven there. One lodging-house keeper, Mrs. ——, goes out dressed respectable, and pawns any stolen property, or sells it at public-houses.'

"As a corroboration of the girl's statement, a wretched-looking boy, only thirteen years of age, gave me the following additional information. He had a few rags hanging about him, and no shirt —indeed, he was hardly covered enough for purposes of decency, his skin being exposed through the rents in his jacket and trousers. He had a stepfather, who treated him very cruelly. The stepfather and the child's mother went 'across the country,' begging and stealing. Before the mother died, an elder brother ran away on account of being beaten.

"'Sometimes,' I give his own words, 'he (the stepfather) wouldn't give us a bit to eat, telling us to go and thieve for it. My brother had been a month gone (he's now a soldier in Gibraltar) when I ran away to join him. I knew where to find him, as we met sometimes. We lived by thieving, and I do still—by pulling flesh, (stealing meat.) I got to lodge at Mrs. ——, and have been there this eight months. I can read and write a little.' This boy then confirmed what the young girl had told me of the grossest acts night by night among the boys and girls, the language, &c., and continued:—'I always sleep on the floor for 1*d.*, and pay ½*d.* besides for coke. At this lodging-house cats and kittens are melted down, sometimes twenty a day. A quart pot is a cat, and pints and half-pints are kittens. A kitten (pint) brings 3*d.* from the rag-shops, and a cat 6*d.* There's convenience to melt them down at the lodging-house. We can't sell clothes in the house, except any lodger wants them; and clothes nearly all go to the Jews in Petticoat-lane. Mrs. —— buys the sawney of us; so much for the lump, 2*d.* a pound about; she sells it again for twice what she gives, and more. Perhaps 30 lbs. of meat every day is sold to her. I have been in prison six times, and have

had three dozen; each time I came out harder. If I left Mrs. ——'s house I don't know how I could get my living. Lots of boys would get away if they could. I never drink. I don't like it. Very few of us boys drink. I don't like thieving, and often go about singing; but I can't live by singing, and I dont know how I could live honestly. If I had money enough to buy a stock of oranges, I think I could be honest.'"

Mr. Mayhew called a meeting of thieves and beggars at the Bristol Union School-room, Shakspeare Walk, Shadwell. One hundred and fifty of them—all under twenty years of age—attended. It may be doubted whether such a meeting could have been brought about in any other city. The young thieves and beggars were very fair samples of their numerous class. Of professed beggars, there were fifty; and sixty-six acknowledged themselves habitual thieves. The announcement that the greater number present were thieves, pleased them exceedingly, and was received with three rounds of applause! Fourteen of them had been in prison over twenty times, and twenty stated that they had been flogged in prison. Seventy-eight of them regularly roamed through the country every year; sixty-five slept regularly in the casual wards of the Unions; and fifty-two occasionally slept in trampers' lodging-houses throughout the country.

The ignorance prevailing among the vast number of street-sellers in London, is rather comically illustrated by Mr. Mayhew, in the following instance:—

"One boy gave me his notions of men and things. He was a thick-limbed, red-cheeked fellow; answered very freely, and sometimes, when I could not help laughing at his replies, laughed loudly himself, as if he entered into the joke.

"Yes, he had heer'd of God who made the world. Couldn't exactly recollec' when he'd heerd on him, but he had, most sarten-ly. Didn't know when the world was made, or how anybody could do it. It must have taken a long time. It was afore his time, 'or yourn either, sir.' Knew there was a book called the Bible; didn't know what it was about; didn't mind to know; knew of such a book to a sartinty, because a young 'oman took one to pop (pawn) for an old 'oman what was on the spree—a bran new 'un—but the cove wouldn't have it, and the old 'oman said he might be d——d. Never heer'd tell on the deluge, of the world having been drownded; it couldn't, for there wasn't water enough to do it. He weren't a going to fret hisself for such things as that. Didn't know what happened to people after death, only that they was buried. Had seen a dead body laid out; was a little afeared at first; poor Dick looked so different, and when you touched his face he was so cold! oh, so cold! Had heer'd on another world; wouldn't mind if he was there hisself, if he could do better, for things was often queer here. Had heer'd on it from a tailor—such a clever cove, a stunner—as went to 'Straliar, (Australia,) and heer'd him say he was going into another world. Had never heer'd of France, but had heer'd of Frenchmen; there wasn't half a quarter so many on 'em as of Italians, with their ear-rings like flash gals. Didn't dislike foreigners, for he never saw none. What was they? Had heer'd of Ireland. Didn't know where it was, but it couldn't be very far, or such lots wouldn't come from there to London. Should say they walked it, ay, every bit of the way, for he'd seen them come in all covered with dust. Had heer'd of people going to sea, and had seen the ships in the river, but didn't know nothing about it, for he was very seldom that way. The sun was made of fire, or it wouldn't make you feel so warm. The stars was fire, too, or they wouldn't shine. They didn't make it warm, they was too small. Didn't know any use they was of. Didn't

know how far they was off; a jolly lot higher than the gas lights some on 'em was. Was never in a church; had heer'd they worshipped God there; didn't know how it was done; had heer'd singing and praying inside when he'd passed; never was there, for he hadn't no togs to go in, and wouldn't be let in among such swells as he had seen coming out. Was a ignorant chap, for he'd never been to school, but was up to many a move, and didn't do bad. Mother said he would make his fortin yet.

"Had heer'd of the Duke of Wellington; he was Old Nosey; didn't think he ever seed him, but had seen his statty. Hadn't heer'd of the battle of Waterloo, nor who it was atween; once lived in Webber-row, Waterloo-road. Thought he had heer'd speak of Bonaparte; didn't know what he was; thought he'd heer'd of Shakspeare, but didn't know whether he was alive or dead, and didn't care. A man with something like that name kept a dolly and did stunning; but he was sich a hard cove that if *he* was dead it wouldn't matter. Had seen the queen, but didn't recollec' her name just at the minute; oh! yes, Wictoria and Albert. Had no notion what the queen had to do. Should think she hadn't such power [he had first to ask me what 'power' was] as the lord mayor, or as Mr. Norton as was the Lambeth beak, and perhaps is still. Was never once before a beak, and didn't want to. Hated the crushers; what business had they to interfere with him if he was only resting his basket in a street? Had been once to the Wick, and once to the Bower; liked tumbling better; he meant to have a little pleasure when the peas came in."

The vagabond propensities of the street-children are thus described by Mr. Mayhew:—

"As soon as the warm weather commences, boys and girls, but more especially boys, leave the town in shoals, traversing the country in every direction; some furnished with trifling articles (such as I have already enumerated) to sell, and others to begging, lurking, or thieving. It is not the street-sellers who so

much resort to the tramp, as those who are devoid of the commonest notions of honesty; a quality these young vagrants sometimes respect when in fear of a jail, and the hard work with which such a place is identified in their minds—and to which, with the peculiar idiosyncrasy of a roving race, they have an insuperable objection.

"I have met with boys and girls, however, to whom a jail had no terrors, and to whom, when in prison, there was only one dread, and that a common one among the ignorant, whether with or without any sense of religion—superstition. 'I lay in prison of a night, sir,' said a boy who was generally among the briskest of his class, 'and think I shall see things.' The 'things' represent the vague fears which many, not naturally stupid, but untaught or ill-taught persons, entertain in the dark. A girl, a perfect termagant in the breaking of windows and suchlike offences, told me something of the same kind. She spoke well of the treatment she experienced in prison, and seemed to have a liking for the matron and officials; her conduct there was quiet and respectful. I believe she was not addicted to drink.

"Many of the girls, as well as the boys, of course trade as they 'tramp.' They often sell, both in the country and in town, little necklaces composed of red berries strung together upon thick thread, for dolls and children; but although I have asked several of them, I have never yet found one who collected the berries and made the necklaces themselves; neither have I met with a single instance in which the girl vendors knew the name of the berries thus used, nor indeed even that they *were* berries. The invariable reply to my questions upon this point has been that they 'are called necklaces;' that 'they are just as they sells 'em to us;' that they 'dont know whether they are made or whether they grow;' and in most cases, that they 'gets them in London, by Shoreditch;' although in one case a little brown-complexioned girl, with bright sparkling eyes, said that 'she got them from the gipsies.' At first I fancied, from this child's appearance, that she was rather superior in intellect to most of her class; but I soon found that she was not a whit above the others, unless, indeed, it were in the possession of the quality of cunning."

The regular "tramps," or wandering vagabonds, are very numerous throughout Great Britain. At certain periods they issue from all the large towns, and prey upon the rural districts like swarms of locusts. In no other country can be found so constant a class of vagrants. The gipsies form but a small portion of the "tramps." These vagrants are miserably clothed, filthy, covered with vermin, and generally very much diseased—sometimes from debauchery, and sometimes from want of food and from exposure. Very few of them are married. The women are nearly all prostitutes. The manner of life of these wanderers is curious. They beg during the day in the towns, or along the roads; and they so arrange their day's tramp as to arrive, most nights, in the neighbourhood of the workhouses. They then hide the money they have collected by begging, and present themselves, after sunset, at the gates of the workhouse, to beg a night's lodging. To nearly every workhouse there are attached vagrant wards, or buildings which are specially set apart for the reception of tramps such as those we have described. These wards are commonly brick buildings, of one story in height. They have brick floors and guard-room beds, with loose straw and rugs for the males, and iron bedsteads, with straw, for the females. They are badly ventilated, and unprovided with any means for producing warmth. All holes for ventilation are sure to be stopped up at night, by the

occupants, with rags or straw, so that the stench of these sleeping-places is disgusting in the extreme. Guards are appointed for these wards, but such is the immorality and indecency of the vagrants, that the most disgusting scenes are common in them. The wards resound with the vilest songs and the foulest language; and so numerous are the "tramps" that the guardians find it impossible to separate the sexes. This vast evil of vagrancy is constantly increasing, and is a natural result of the monopolies and oppressions of the aristocracy. It is stated that on the 25th of March, 1848, the 626 Unions of England and Wales relieved 16,086 vagrants. But this scarcely gives an idea of the magnitude of the evil. Between 40,000 and 50,000 "tramps" infest the roads and streets of England and Wales every day. The majority of them are thieves, and nearly all are almost brutally ignorant.

In London there are large numbers of small dealers, called costermongers and patterers. Persons belonging to these classes seldom or never rise above their trade, and they seem to have a kind of hereditary pride in their degraded position. Many of the costermongers and patterers are thieves, and the general character of these classes is very debased; ignorance and immorality prevail to a fearful extent. The patterers are more intelligent than the costermongers, but they are also more immoral. They help off their wares, which are chiefly stationery and quack medicines, by long ha-

rangues, while the costermongers merely cry their fish, greens, &c. about the streets. The number of people dependent upon costermongering in London is about thirty thousand. The patterers are not so numerous.

Concubinage is the rule and marriage the exception among both costermongers and patterers. Mr. Mayhew estimates that only one-tenth of the couples living together and carrying on the costermongering trade are married. There is no honour attached to the marriage state and no shame to concubinage. In good times the women are rigidly faithful to their paramours, but in the worst pinch of poverty a departure from fidelity is not considered heinous. About three out of a hundred costermongers ever attend a church, and the majority of them have no knowledge of Christianity; they associate the Church of England and aristocracy, and hate both. Slang is acquired very rapidly, and some costermongers will converse in it by the hour. The women use it sparingly; the girls more than the women; the men more than the girls; and the boys most of all. Pronouncing backward is the simple principle upon which the costermonger slang is founded.

The patterers, though a vagrant, are an organized class. Mr. Mayhew says—

"There is a telegraphic despatch between them, through the length and breadth of the land. If two patterers (previously unacquainted) meet in the provinces, the following, or something like it, will be their conversation:—Can you 'voker romeny' (can

you speak cant?) What is your 'monekeer?' (name.) Perhaps it turns out that one is 'White-headed Bob,' and the other 'Plymouth Ned.' They have a 'shant of gatter' (pot of beer) at the nearest 'boozing ken,' (ale-house,) and swear eternal friendship to each other. The old saying, that 'When the liquor is in the wit is out,' is remarkably fulfilled on these occasions, for they betray to the 'flatties' (natives) all their profits and proceedings.

"It is to be supposed that in country districts, where there are no streets, the patterer is obliged to call at the houses. As they are mostly without the hawker's license, and sometimes find wet linen before it is lost, the rural districts are not fond of their visits; and there are generally two or three persons in a village reported to be 'gammy,' that is, unfavourable. If a patterer has been 'crabbed,' that is, offended, at any of the 'cribs,' (houses,) he mostly chalks a signal on or near the door. I give one or two instances:—

"'Bone,' meaning good.

"'Cooper'd,' spoiled by the imprudence of some other patterer.

"'Gammy,' likely to have you taken up.

"'Flummut,' sure of a month in quod.

"In most lodging-houses there is an old man who is the guide to every 'walk' in the vicinity, and who can tell every house on every round that is 'good for a cold 'tater.' In many cases there is over the kitchen mantelpiece a map of the district, dotted here and there with memorandums of failure or success.

"Patterers are fond of carving their names and avocations about the houses they visit. The old jail at Dartford has been some years a 'padding-ken.' In one of the rooms appear the following autographs:—

"'Jemmy, the Rake, bound to Bristol; bad beds, but no bugs. Thank God for all things.'

"'Razor George and his moll slept here the day after Christmas; just out of "stir," (jail,) for "muzzling a peeler."'

"'Scotch Mary, with "driz," (lace,) bound to Dover and back, please God.'

"Sometimes these inscriptions are coarse and obscene; sometimes very well written and orderly. Nor do they want illustrations.

"At the old factory, Lincoln, is a portrait of the town beadle, formerly a soldier; it is drawn with different-coloured chalks, and ends with the following couplet:—

'You are a B for false swearing,
In hell they'll roast you like a herring.'

"Concubinage is very common among patterers, especially on their travels; they have their regular rounds, and call the peregrination 'going on circuit.' For the most part they are early risers; this gives them a facility for meeting poor girls who have had a night's shelter in the union workhouses. They offer such girls some refreshments, swear they are single men, and promise comforts certainly superior to the immediate position of their victims. Consent is generally obtained; perhaps a girl of fourteen or fifteen, previously virtuous, is induced to believe in a promise of constant protection, but finds herself, the next morning, ruined and deserted; nor is it unlikely that, within a month or two, she will see her seducer in the company of a dozen incidental wives. A gray-headed miscreant, called 'Cutler Tom,' boasts of five hundred such exploits; and there is too great reason to believe that the picture of his own drawing is not greatly overcharged."

A reverend gentleman, who had enjoyed the best opportunities for observing the patterers, gave Mr. Mayhew the following information:—

"I have seen fathers and mothers place their boys and girls in positions of incipient enormity, and command them to use language and gestures to each other which would make a harlot blush, and almost a heathen tremble. I have hitherto viewed the patterer as a salesman, having something in his hand, on whose merits, real or pretended, he talks people out of their money. By slow degrees prosperity rises, but rapid is the advance of evil. The patterer sometimes gets 'out of stock,' and is obliged, at no great sacrifice of conscience, to 'patter' in another strain. In every large town, sham official documents, with crests, seals, and

signatures, can be got for half-a-crown. Armed with these, the patterer becomes a 'lurker,' that is, an impostor; his papers certify any and every 'ill that flesh is heir to.' Shipwreck is called a 'shake lurk;' loss by fire is a 'glim.' Sometimes the petitioner has had a horse which has dropped dead with the mad staggers; or has a wife ill or dying, and six or seven children at once sickening of the small-pox. Children are borrowed to support the appearance; the case is certified by the minister and churchwardens of a parish which exists only in imagination; and as many people dislike the trouble of investigation, the patterer gets enough to raise a stock in trade, and divides the spoil between the swag-shop and the gin-palace. Sometimes they are detected, and get a 'drag,' (three months in prison.)

"They have many narrow escapes; one occurs to me of a somewhat ludicrous character:—A patterer and lurker (now dead) known by the name of 'Captain Moody,' unable to get a 'fakement' written or printed, was standing almost naked in the streets of a neighbouring town. A gentleman stood still and heard his piteous tale, but, having been 'done' more than once, he resolved to examine the affair, and begged the petitioner to conduct him to his wife and children, who were in a garret on a bed of languishing, with neither clothes, food, nor fire, but, it appeared, with faith enough to expect a supply from 'Him who feedeth the ravens,' and in whose sacred name even a cold 'tater was implored. The patterer, or half-patterer and half-beggar, took the gentleman (who promised a sovereign if every thing was square) through innumerable and intricate windings, till he came to an outhouse or sort of stable. He saw the key outside the door, and begged the gentleman to enter and wait till he borrowed a light of a neighbour to show him up-stairs. The illumination never arrived, and the poor charitable man found that the miscreant had locked him into the stable. The patterer went to the padding-ken, told the story with great glee, and left that locality within an hour of the occurrence."

Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and other provincial cities possess an ignorant and immoral popula-

tion quite equal, in proportion to the entire population of each city, to that of London. In each may be found a degraded class, with scarcely any ideas of religion or morality, living in the most wretched manner, and practising every species of vice. The cellar-houses, in which many of them live, have been described in another chapter. They are the filthy abodes of a people almost reduced to a brutish condition. In Liverpool parish there is a *cellar-population of* 20,000, a large number of whom are continually engaged in criminal practices. There are portions of the city of Glasgow which a stranger could scarcely traverse safely at night, and where an amount of vice and misery may be witnessed which is not exceeded in either London or Liverpool.

In the mining and manufacturing districts of England there is much ignorance and more vice. In both, there are schools of a miserable character, but those young persons who can find time to attend them learn nothing beyond reading, writing, and the simplest rules of arithmetic. The mining labour, as carried on in the mines of England, is extremely demoralizing in its tendency, as we have shown in another part of this work. The report of parliamentary commissioners contains some statements in regard to the darkness of mind and corruption of heart among young persons employed in the various trades and manufactures.

The following facts are quoted from the Second Report of the "Children's Employment Commission."

The moral and religious state of the children and young persons employed in the trades and manufactures of Birmingham, is described by the sub-commissioners as very unfavourable. The social and domestic duties and affections are but little cultivated and practised; great numbers never attend any place of public worship; and of the state of juvenile crime some conception may be formed by the statement, that of the total number of known or suspected offenders in this town, during the twelve last months—namely, 1223—at least one-half were under fifteen years of age.

As to illicit sexual intercourse, it seems to prevail almost universally, and from a very early period of life; to this common conclusion witnesses of every rank give testimony.

WOLVERHAMPTON.—Of the moral condition of the youthful population in the Wolverhampton district, Mr. Horne says—"Putting together all I elicited from various witnesses and conversations with working people, abroad and at home, and all that fell under my observation, I am obliged to come to the conclusion, that the moral virtues of the great majority of the children are as few in number and as feeble in practice as can well be conceived in a civilized country, surrounded by religious and educational institutions, and by individuals anxious for the improvement of the condition of the working classes."

He adds of WITTENHALL—"A lower condition of

morals, in the fullest sense of the term, could not, I think, be found. I do not mean by this that there are many more prominent vices among them, but that moral feelings and sentiments do not exist among them. They have no morals."

SHEFFIELD.—In all the Sheffield trades, employing large numbers of children, it is stated that there is a much closer intermixture of the younger children with the elder youths, and with the men, than is usual in the cotton, woollen, and flax factories; and that the conversation to which the children are compelled to listen, would debase their minds and blunt their moral feelings even if they had been carefully and virtuously educated, but that of course this result takes place more rapidly and completely in the case of those who have had little or no religious culture, and little but bad example before their eyes from their cradle upward.

Habits of drinking are formed at a very early age, malt liquor being generally introduced into the workshops, of which the youngest children are encouraged to partake. "Very many," say the police-officers, "frequent beer-shops, where they play at dominoes, bagatelle, &c. for money or drink." Early intemperance is assigned by the medical men as one cause of the great mortality of Sheffield. "There are beer-houses," says the Rev. Mr. Farish, "attended by youths exclusively, for the men will not have them in the same houses

with themselves. In these beer-houses are youths of both sexes encouraged to meet, and scenes destructive of every vestige of virtue or morality ensue.

But it is stated by all classes of witnesses, that "the most revolting feature of juvenile depravity in this town is early contamination from the association of the sexes," that "juvenile prostitution is exceedingly common." "The evidence," says the sub-commissioner, "might have been doubled which attests the early commencement of sexual and promiscuous intercourse among boys and girls."

SEDGLEY.—At Sedgley and the neighbouring villages, the number of girls employed in nail-making considerably exceeds that of the boys. Of these girls Mr. Horne reports—"Their appearance, manners, habits, and moral natures (so far as the word *moral* can be applied to them) are in accordance with their half-civilized condition. Constantly associating with ignorant and depraved adults and young persons of the opposite sex, they naturally fall into all their ways; and drink, smoke, swear, throw off all restraint in word and act, and become as bad as a man. The heat of the forge and the hardness of the work renders few clothes needful in winter; and in summer, the six or seven individuals who are crowded into these little dens find the heat almost suffocating. The men and boys are usually naked, except a pair of trousers and an open shirt, though they very often have no shirt; and

the women and girls have only a thin ragged petticoat, and an open shirt without sleeves."

In the mining districts, there is even more ignorance and depravity than in the places where factories and workshops abound. The nature of the work, and various wants, such as no freemen would suffer from—want of proper schools and proper amusements—induce this state of things. An American visiting any of these mining districts, would be astounded at the dulness, ignorance, and viciousness that prevails among the labourers—men and women, boys and girls. Many of them are perfect heathens—never hearing of God except when his awful name is "taken in vain." Of Christ and his mission they hear somewhat, but know nothing positively. Newspapers—those daily and weekly messengers that keep Americans fully informed of the affairs of the world—they seldom see. The gin-shop and the brothel are their common resorts.

Missionaries are wanted in Great Britain. Alas! that in the middle of the nineteenth century, there should be so many hundreds of thousands of people, in the vicinity of a costly church establishment, without any knowledge of the Bible!—that a professedly Christian government should keep so many souls in ignorance of Christianity!—that a country boasting of its civilization and enlightenment should contain so much darkness and depravity!

## CHAPTER X.

### COOLIE SLAVERY IN THE BRITISH COLONIES.

THE British government emancipated the negro slaves held under its authority in the West Indies, thereby greatly depreciating the value of the islands, permitting a half-tamed race to fall back into a state of moral and mental darkness, and adding twenty millions to the national debt, to be paid out of the sweat and blood of her own white serfs. This was termed a grand act of humanity; those who laboured for it have been lauded and laurelled without stint, and English writers have been exceedingly solicitous that the world should not "burst in ignorance" of the achievement.

Being free, the negroes, with the indolence inherent in their nature, would not work. Many purses suffered in consequence, and the purse is a very tender place to injure many persons. It became necessary to substitute other labourers for the free negroes, and the Coolies of India were taken to the Antilles for experiment. These labourers were generally sober,

steady, and industrious. But how were they treated? A colonist of Martinique, who visited Trinidad in June, 1848, thus writes to the French author of a treatise on free and slave labour:—

"If I could fully describe to you the evils and suffering endured by the Indian immigrants (Coolies) in that horribly governed colony, I should rend the heart of the Christian world by a recital of enormities unknown in the worst periods of colonial slavery.

"Borrowing the language of the prophet, I can truly say, 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is sad; from the sole of the foot to the top of the head nothing is sound;' wounds, sores, swollen ulcers, which are neither bandaged, nor soothed, nor rubbed with oil.

"My soul has been deeply afflicted by all that I have seen. How many human beings lost! So far as I can judge, in spite of their wasting away, all are young, perishing under the weight of disease. Most of them are dropsical, for want of nourishment. Groups of children, the most interesting I have ever seen, scions of a race doomed to misfortune, were remarkable for their small limbs, wrinkled and reduced to the size of spindles—and not a rag to cover them! And to think that all this misery, all this destruction of humanity, all this waste of the stock of a ruined colony, might have been avoided, but has not been! Great God! it is painful beyond expression to think that such a neglect of duty and of humanity on the part of the colonial authorities, as well of the metropolis as of the colony—a neglect which calls for a repressive if not a retributive justice—will go entirely unpunished, as it has hitherto done, notwithstanding the indefatigable efforts of Colonel Fagan, the superintendent of the immigrants in this colony, an old Indian officer of large experience, of whom I have heard nothing but good, and never any evil thing spoken, in all my travels through the island.

"I am told that Colonel Fagan prepared a regulation for the government and protection of the immigrants—which regulation

would probably realize, beyond all expectation, the object aimed at; but scarcely had he commenced his operations when orders arrived from the metropolis to suppress it, and substitute another which proceeded from the ministry. The Governor, Mr. Harris, displeased that his own regulation was thus annulled, pronounced the new order impossible to be executed, and it was withdrawn, without having been properly tried. The minister sent another order in regard to immigration, prepared in his hotel in Downing street; but Governor Harris pronounced it to be still more difficult of execution than the first, and it, too, failed. It is in this manner that, from beginning to end, the affairs of the Indian immigrants have been conducted. It was only necessary to treat them with justice and kindness to render them—thanks to their active superintendent—the best labourers that could be imported into the colony. They are now protected neither by regulations nor ordinances; no attention is paid to the experienced voice of their superintendent—full of benevolence for them, and always indefatigably profiting by what can be of advantage to them. If disease renders a Coolie incapable of work, he is driven from his habitation. This happens continually; he is not in that case even paid his wages. What, then, can the unfortunate creature do? Very different from the Creole or the African; far distant from his country, without food, without money; disease, the result of insufficient food and too severe labour, makes it impossible for him to find employment. He drags himself into the forests or upon the skirts of the roads, lies there and dies!

"Some years since, the unfortunate Governor (Wall) of Gorea was hung for having pitilessly inflicted a fatal corporal punishment on a negro soldier found guilty of mutiny; and this soldier, moreover, was under his orders. In the present case, I can prove a neglect to a great extent murderous. The victims are Indian Coolies of Trinidad. In less than one year, as is shown by official documents, *two thousand* corpses of these unfortunate creatures have furnished food to the crows of the island; and a similar system is pursued, not only without punishment, but without even forming the subject of an official inquest. Strange and deplorable contradiction! and yet the nation which gives us

this example boasts of extending the ægis of its protection over all its subjects, without distinction! It is this nation, also, that complacently takes to itself the credit of extending justice equally over all classes, over the lordly peer and the humblest subject, without fear, favour, or affection!"

In the Mauritius, the Coolies who have been imported are in a miserable condition. The planters have profited by enslaving these mild and gentle Hindoos, and rendering them wretched.

"By aid of continued Coolie immigration," says Mr. Henry C. Carey,* "the export of sugar from the Mauritius has been doubled in the last sixteen years, having risen from seventy to one hundred and forty millions of pounds. Sugar is therefore very cheap, and the foreign competition is thereby driven from the British market. 'Such conquests,' however, says, very truly, the London Spectator, 'don't always bring profit to the conqueror; nor does production itself prove prosperity. Competition for the possession of a field may be carried so far as to reduce prices below prime cost; and it is clear, from the notorious facts of the West Indies—from the change of property, from the total unproductiveness of much property still—that the West India production of sugar has been carried on not only without replacing capital, but with a constant sinking of capital.' The 'free' Coolie and the 'free' negro of Jamaica have been urged to competition for the sale of sugar, and they seem likely to perish together; but compensation for this is found in the fact that 'free trade has, in reducing the prices of commodities for home consumption, enabled the labourer to devote a greater share of his income toward purchasing clothing and luxuries, and has increased the home trade to an enormous extent.' What effect this reduction of 'the prices of commodities for home consumption'

* The Slave Trade, Domestic and Foreign.

has had upon the poor Coolies, may be judged from the following passage:—'I here beheld, for the first time, a class of beings of whom we have heard much, and for whom I have felt considerable interest. I refer to the Coolies imported by the British government to take the places of the *faineant* negroes, when the apprenticeship system was abolished. Those I saw were wandering about the streets, dressed rather tastefully, but always meanly, and usually carrying over their shoulder a sort of *chiffonnier's* sack, in which they threw whatever refuse stuff they found in the streets or received as charity. Their figures are generally superb, and their Eastern costume, to which they adhere as far as their poverty will permit of any clothing, sets off their lithe and graceful forms to great advantage. Their faces are almost uniformly of the finest classic mould, and illuminated by pairs of those dark, swimming, and propitiatory eyes which exhaust the language of tenderness and passion at a glance. But they are the most inveterate mendicants on the island. It is said that those brought from the interior of India are faithful and efficient workmen, while those from Calcutta and its vicinity are good for nothing. Those that were prowling about the streets of Spanish Town and Kingston, I presume were of the latter class, for there is not a planter on the island, it is said, from whom it would be more difficult to get any work than from one of them. They subsist by begging altogether. They are not vicious nor intemperate, nor troublesome particularly, except as beggars. In that calling they have a pertinacity before which a Northern mendicant would grow pale. They will not be denied. They will stand perfectly still and look through a window from the street for a quarter of an hour, if not driven away, with their imploring eyes fixed upon you like a stricken deer, without saying a word or moving a muscle. They act as if it were no disgrace for them to beg, as if an indemnification which they are entitled to expect, for the outrage perpetrated upon them in bringing them from their distant homes to this strange island, is a daily supply of their few and cheap necessities, as they call for them. I confess that their begging did not leave upon my mind the impression produced by ordinary mendicancy. They do not look as if they ought to

work. I never saw one smile; and though they showed no positive suffering, I never saw one look happy. Each face seemed to be constantly telling the unhappy story of their woes, and, like fragments of a broken mirror, each reflecting in all its hateful proportions the national outrage of which they are the victims.'"*

English writers have frequently charged the citizens of the United States with being sordid, and caring more for pecuniary profit than honourable principle. No national measure of the great North American Republic, however, is so deeply tainted with avaricious motives as the colonial enactments and commercial schemes of Great Britain. Witness the government of British India, and the infamous traffic in opium forced upon the Chinese. In the conveyance of Coolies to the West Indies, and their treatment while toiling in those islands, we see the same base spirit displayed. All considerations of humanity have been sacrificed to calculations of profit. A people, naturally mild and intelligent, have been taken from their native land to distant islands, to take the place of the fierce and barbarous Africans, to whose civilization slavery seems almost necessary; and in their new land of bondage these poor creatures have been deprived of the inducements to steady exertion, and left to beg or starve.

After the passage of the act abolishing negro slavery, an arrangement was sanctioned by the colo-

* Bigelow's Jamaica in 1850.

nial government for the introduction of Indian labourers into the Mauritius, under a species of apprenticeship. The Coolies were engaged at five rupees, equal to ten shillings a month, for five years, with also one pound of rice, a quarter of a pound of dhall, or grain—a kind of pulse—and one ounce of butter, or ghee, daily. But for every day they were absent from their work they were to return two days to their masters, who retained one rupee per month to pay an advance made of six months' wages, and to defray the expense of their passage. If these men came into Port Louis to complain of their masters, they were lodged in the Bagne prison till their masters were summoned! Before the magistrates the masters had a great advantage over their servants. The latter being foreigners, but few of them could speak French, and they had no one to assist them in pleading their cause. They generally represented themselves as having been deceived with respect to the kind of labour to be required of them.*

A large number of Indian convicts have been transported to the Mauritius, and their slavery is deplorable. Backhouse, who visited the island when these poor wretches were not so numerous as they now are, says—"Among the Indian convicts working on the road, we noticed one wearing chains; several had a

* Backhouse's Visit to the Mauritius.

slight single ring round the ankle. They are lodged in huts with flat roofs, or in other inferior dwellings near the road. There are about seven hundred of them in the island. What renders them peculiarly objects of sympathy is, that they were sent here for life, and no hope of any remission of sentence is held out to them for good conduct. Theirs is a hopeless bondage; and though it is said by some that they are not hard worked, yet they are generally, perhaps constantly, breaking stones and mending the roads, and under a tropical sun. There are among them persons who were so young when transported that, in their offences, they could only be looked on as the dupes of those who were older, and many of them bear good characters."

The hopeless slavery of these convicts is a doom which displays, in a striking light, the characteristics of British philanthropy. Death would be preferable to such a punishment, in the estimation of many of the Hindoos; but the British authorities are determined to make the punishment pay! After the "eternal blazon" concerning the act of emancipating negroes, for which the pauperized labourers of Great Britain had to pay by their slavery, the colonial government created another system, attended with the misery and degradation of a people better fitted for freedom than the negroes. The civilized world is requested to look on and admire!

## CHAPTER XI.

### SLAVERY IN BRITISH INDIA.

THE extensive, populous, and wealthy peninsula of Hindostan has suffered greatly from the crushing effects of the British slave system. From the foundation of the empire in India by Clive, conquest and extortion seem to have been the grand objects of the aristocratic government. There unscrupulous soldiers have fought, slaughtered, enslaved, and plundered. There younger sons, with rank, but without fortune, have filled their purses. There vast and magnificent tracts of country have been wasted with fire and sword, in punishment for the refusal of native princes to become slaves. There the fat of the land has been garnered up for the luxury of the conquerors, while famine has destroyed the people by thousands. There, indeed, has the British aristocracy displayed its most malignant propensities—rioting in robbery and bloodshed—setting all religion at defiance, while upholding the Christian standard—and earning to the full the continued execration of mankind.

In a powerful work, called "The Aristocracy of England: a History for the People, by John Hampden, Jun.," a book we commend to the people of England, we have the following passage:—

"From the hour that Clive and his coadjutors came into the discovery of the vast treasures of the native princes, whence he himself obtained, besides his jaghire of £30,000 per annum, about £300,000; and he and his fellows altogether, between 1759 and 1763, no less than £5,940,498, exclusive of this said jaghire, the cupidity of the aristocracy became excited to the highest degree; and from that period to the present, India has been one scene of flights of aristocratic locusts, of fighting, plundering, oppression, and extortion of the natives. We will not go into these things; they are fully and faithfully written in Mills's 'History of British India;' in Howitt's 'Colonization and Christianity;' and, above all, in the letters of the Honourable Frederick Shore, brother of Lord Teignmouth, a man who passed through all offices—from a clerk to that of a judge—and saw much of the system and working of things in many parts of India. He published his letters originally in the India papers, that any one on the spot might challenge their truth; and, since his death, they have been reprinted in England. The scene which that work opens up is the most extraordinary, and demands the attention of every lover of his country and his species. It fully accounts for the strange facts, that India is now drained of its wealth; that its public works, especially the tanks, which contributed by their waters to maintain its fertility, are fallen to decay; that one-third of the country is a jungle inhabited by tigers, who pay no taxes; that its people are reduced to the utmost wretchedness, and are often, when a crop fails, swept away by half a million at once by famine and its pendant, pestilence, as in 1770, and again in 1838–9. To such a degree is this reduction of the wealth and cultivation of India carried, that while others of our colonies pay taxes to the amount of a pound or thirty shillings per head, India pays only four shillings.

"At the renewal of its charter in 1834, its income was about *twenty millions*, its debt about *forty millions*. Since then its income has gradually fallen to about *seventeen millions*, and its debt we hear now whispered to be about *seventy millions*. Such have been the effects of exhausted fields and physical energies on the one hand, and of wars, especially that of Affghanistan, on the other. It requires no conjurer, much less a very profound arithmetician, to perceive that at this rate we need be under no apprehension of Russia, for a very few years will take India out of our hands by mere financial force.

"Our aristocratic government, through the Board of Control, keep up and exert a vast patronage in India. The patronage of the president of this board alone, independent of his salary of £5000 a year, is about *twenty-one* thousand pounds. But the whole aristocracy have an interest in keeping up wars in India, that their sons as officers, especially in these times of European peace, may find here both employment and promotion. This, then, the Company has to contend against; and few are they who are aware of the formidable nature of this power as it is exerted in this direction, and of the strange and unconstitutional legislative authority with which they have armed themselves for this purpose. How few are they who are aware that, while the East India Company has been blamed as the planners, authors, and movers of the fatal and atrocious invasion of Cabul, that the Directors of the Company only first, and to their great amazement, learned the outbreak of that war from the public Indian papers. So far from that war being one of their originating, it was most opposed to their present policy, and disastrous to their affairs. How then came this monstrous war about, and *who* then did originate it? To explain this requires us to lay open a monstrous stretch of unconstitutional power on the part of our government—a monstrous stratagem for the maintenance of their aristocratic views in India, which it is wonderful could have escaped the notice and reprehension of the public. Let the reader mark well what follows.

"In the last charter, granted in 1834, a clause was introduced, binding a secret committee of the East India Company, consisting

of three persons only, the chairman, deputy chairman, and senior director, who are solemnly sworn to this work, to receive private despatches from the Board of Control, and without communicating them to a single individual besides themselves, to forward them to India, where the receivers are bound, *without question or appeal*, to enforce their immediate execution. By this inquisitorial system, this worse than Spanish or Venetian system of secret decrees, government has reserved to itself a direction of the affairs of India, freed from all constitutional or representative check, and reduced the India Company to a mere cat's-paw. By the sworn secrecy and implicit obedience of this mysterious triumvirate, the Company is made the unconscious instrument of measures most hostile to its own views, and most fatal to its best interests. It may at any hour become the medium of a secret order which may threaten the very destruction of its empire. Such was the case with the war of Cabul. The aristocratic government at home planned and ordered it; and the unconscious Company was made at once to carry out a scheme so atrocious, so wicked and unprincipled, as well as destructive to its plans of civil economy, and to bear also the infamy of it. Awaking, therefore, to the tremendous nature of the secret powers thus introduced into their machinery by government, the Company determined to exercise also a power happily intrusted to *them*. Hence the recall of Lord Ellenborough, who, in obedience to aristocratic views at home, was not only running headlong over all their plans of pacific policy, but with his armies and elephants was treading under foot their cotton and sugar plantations. Hence, on the other hand, the favour and support which this warlike lord finds with the great martial duke, and the home government."

The policy of the European conquerors of India was fully illustrated during the gubernatorial term of Warren Hastings. Of his extortion the eloquent Macaulay says—

"The principle which directed all his dealings with his neighbours is fully expressed by the old motto of one of the great predatory families of Teviotdale—'Thou shalt want ere I want.' He seems to have laid it down, as a fundamental proposition which could not be disputed, that when he had not as many lacs of rupees as the public service required, he was to take them from anybody who had. One thing, indeed, is to be said in excuse for him. The pressure applied to him by his employers at home was such as only the highest virtue could have withstood—such as left him no choice except to commit great wrongs, or to resign his high post, and with that post all his hopes of fortune and distinction. It is perfectly true, that the directors never enjoined or applauded any crime. Far from it. Whoever examines their letters at that time will find there many just and humane sentiments, many excellent precepts; in short, an admirable circle of political ethics. But every exhortation is modified or annulled by a demand for money. 'Govern leniently, and send more money; practise strict justice and moderation toward neighbouring powers, and send more money;' this is, in truth, the sum of almost all the instructions that Hastings ever received from home. Now these instructions, being interpreted, mean simply, 'Be the father and the oppressor of the people; be just and unjust, moderate and rapacious.' The directors dealt with India as the church, in the good old times, dealt with a heretic. They delivered the victim over to the executioners, with an earnest request that all possible tenderness might be shown. We by no means accuse or suspect those who framed these despatches of hypocrisy. It is probable that, writing fifteen thousand miles from the place where their orders were to be carried into effect, they never perceived the gross inconsistency of which they were guilty. But the inconsistency was at once manifest to their lieutenant at Calcutta, who, with an empty treasury, with an unpaid army, with his own salary often in arrear, with deficient crops, with government tenants daily running away, was called upon to remit home another half million without fail. Hastings saw that it was absolutely necessary for him to disregard either the moral discourses or the pecuniary requisitions of his em-

ployers. Being forced to disobey them in something, he had to consider what kind of disobedience they would most readily pardon; and he correctly judged that the safest course would be to neglect the sermons and to find the rupees."

How were the rupees found? By selling provinces that had never belonged to the British dominions; by the destruction of the brave Rohillas of Rohilcund, in the support of the cruel tyrant, Surajah Dowlah, sovereign of Oude, of which terrible act Macaulay says—

"Then the horrors of Indian war were let loose on the fair valleys and cities of Rohilcund; the whole country was in a blaze. More than a hundred thousand people fled from their homes to pestilential jungles, preferring famine and fever and the haunts of tigers to the tyranny of him to whom an English and a Christian government had, for shameful lucre, sold their substance and their blood, and the honour of their wives and daughters. Colonel Champion remonstrated with the Nabob Vizier, and sent strong representations to Fort William; but the governor had made no conditions as to the mode in which the war was to be carried on. He had troubled himself about nothing but his forty lacs; and, though he might disapprove of Surajah Dowlah's wanton barbarity, he did not think himself entitled to interfere, except by offering advice. This delicacy excites the admiration of the reverend biographer. 'Mr. Hastings,' he says, 'could not himself dictate to the Nabob, nor permit the commander of the Company's troops to dictate how the war was to be carried on.' No, to be sure. Mr. Hastings had only to put down by main force the brave struggles of innocent men fighting for their liberty. Their military resistance crushed, his duties ended; and he had then only to fold his arms and look on while their villages were burned, their children butchered, and their women violated."

By such a course of action, Warren Hastings made the British empire in India pay. By such means did

the aristocrats, of whom the governor was the tool, obtain the money which would enable them to live in luxury.

"The servants of the Company obtained—not for their employers, but for themselves—a monopoly of almost the whole internal trade; they forced the natives to buy dear and sell cheap; they insulted with perfect impunity the tribunals, the police, and the fiscal authorities of the country; they covered with their protection a set of native dependants, who ranged through the provinces spreading desolation and terror wherever they appeared. Every servant of a British factor was armed with all the power of his master, and his master was armed with all the power of the Company. Enormous fortunes were thus rapidly accumulated at Calcutta, while thirty millions of human beings were reduced to the last extremity of wretchedness. They had been accustomed to live under tyranny, but never under tyranny like this; they found the little finger of the Company thicker than the loins of Surajah Dowlah. Under their old masters they had at least one resource; when the evil became insupportable, they rose and pulled down the government. But the English government was not to be so shaken off. That government, oppressive as the most oppressive form of barbarian despotism, was strong with all the strength of civilization; it resembled the government of evil genii rather than the government of human tyrants." * * *

"The foreign lords of Bengal were naturally objects of hatred to all the neighbouring powers, and to all the haughty race presented a dauntless front; their armies, everywhere outnumbered, were everywhere victorious. A succession of commanders, formed in the school of Clive, still maintained the fame of their country. 'It must be acknowledged,' says the Mussulman historian of those times, 'that this nation's presence of mind, firmness of temper, and undaunted bravery are past all question. They join the most resolute courage to the most cautious prudence; nor have they their equal in the art of ranging themselves in battle array and fighting in order. If to so many military qualifications they knew how to join the arts of government—if they exerted as much

ingenuity and solicitude in relieving the people of God as they do in whatever concerns their military affairs, no nation in the world would be preferable to them or worthier of command; but the people under their dominion groan everywhere, and are reduced to poverty and distress. O God! come to the assistance of thine afflicted servants, and deliver them from the oppressions they suffer.'"

From the earliest times the "village system," with its almost patriarchal regulations, seems to have prevailed in Hindostan. Each village had its distinct organization, and over a certain number of villages, or a district, was an hereditary chief and an accountant, both possessing great local influence and authority, and certain estates.* The Hindoos were strongly attached to their native villages, and could only be forced to abandon them by the most constant oppressions. Dynasties might change and revolutions occur, but so long as each little community remained undisturbed, the Hindoos were contented. Mohammedan conquerors left this beautiful system, which had much more of genuine freedom than the British institutions at the present day, untouched. The English conquerors were not so merciful, although they were acquainted with Christianity. The destruction of local organizations and the centralization of authority, which is always attended with the increase of slavery,† have been the aims of English efforts. The principle that the government is the sole

* Brigg's Historical Fragments. † Carey.

proprietor of the land, and therefore entitled to a large share of the produce, has been established, and slavery, to escape famine and misery, has become necessary to the Hindoos.

Exhaustion was the result of the excessive taxation laid upon the Hindoos by the East India Company. As the government became stinted for revenue, Lord Cornwallis was instructed to make a permanent settlement, by means of which all the rights of village proprietors over a large portion of Bengal were sacrificed in favour of the Zemindars, or head men, who were thus at once constituted great landed proprietors—masters of a large number of poor tenants, with power to punish at discretion those who were not able to pay whatever rent was demanded.* From free communities, the villages were reduced to the condition of British tenants-at-will. The Zemindaree system was first applied to Bengal. In Madras another system, called the Ryotwar, was introduced. This struck a fatal blow at the local organizations, which were the sources of freedom and happiness among the Hindoos. Government assumed all the functions of an immediate landholder, and dealt with the individual cultivators as its own tenants, getting as much out of them as possible.

The Zemindars are an unthrifty, rack-renting class, and take the uttermost farthing from the under-tenants.

* Carey.

Oppressions and evictions are their constant employments; and since they have been constituted a landed aristocracy, they have fully acted out the character in the genuine British fashion.

Another tenure, called the Patnee, has been established of late years, by some of the great Zemindars, with the aid of government enactments, and it is very common in Bengal. The great Zemindar, for a consideration, makes over a portion of his estate in fee to another, subject to a perpetual rent, payable through the collector, who receives it on behalf of the zemindar; and if it is not paid, the interests of the patneedar are sold by the collector. These, again, have sub-patneedars, and the system has become very much in vogue in certain districts. The parties are like the Irish middlemen, and the last screws the tenant to the uttermost.*

During the British government of Bengal, wealth has been accumulated by a certain superior class, and population, cultivation, and the receipts from rent of land, have largely increased; but, as in England, the mass of the people are poor and degraded. In the rich provinces of Upper India, where the miserable landed system of the conquerors has been introduced, the results have been even more deplorable. Communities, once free, happy, and possessed of plenty, are now broken up, or subjected to such excessive taxation that their members are kept in poverty and slavery.

* Campbell's Modern India.

Colonel Sleeman, in his "Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official," records a conversation which he held with the head landholder of a village, organized under the Zemindar system. During the dialogue, some statements were made which are important for our purpose.

The colonel congratulated himself that he had given satisfactory replies to the arguments of the Zemindar, and accounted naturally for the evils suffered by the villagers. The reader will, doubtless, form a different opinion:—

"In the early part of November, after a heavy fall of rain, I was driving alone in my buggy from Garmuktesin on the Ganges, to Meerut. The roads were very bad, the stage a double one, and my horse became tired and unable to go on. I got out at a small village to give him a little rest and food; and sat down under the shade of one old tree upon the trunk of another that the storm had blown down, while my groom, the only servant I had with me, rubbed down and baited my horse. I called for some parched grain from the same shop which supplied my horse, and got a draught of good water, drawn from the well by an old woman, in a brass jug lent to me for the purpose by the shopkeeper.

"While I sat contentedly and happily stripping my parched grain from its shell, and eating it grain by grain, the farmer, or head landholder of the village, a sturdy old Rajpoot, came up and sat himself, without any ceremony, down by my side, to have a little conversation. [To one of the dignitaries of the land, in whose presence the aristocracy are alone considered entitled to chairs, this easy familiarity seems at first strange and unaccountable; he is afraid that the man intends to offer him some indignity, or what is still worse, mistakes him for something less than a dignitary! The following dialogue took place:—]

"'You are a Rajpoot, and a Zemindar?' (landholder.)

"'Yes; I am the head landholder of this village.'

"'Can you tell me how that village in the distance is elevated above the ground; is it from the debris of old villages, or from a rock underneath?'

"'It is from the debris of old villages. That is the original seat of all the Rajpoots around; we all trace our descent from the founders of that village, who built and peopled it many centuries ago.'

"'And you have gone on subdividing your inheritances here as elsewhere, no doubt, till you have hardly any of you any thing to eat?'

"'True, we have hardly any of us enough to eat; but that is the fault of the government, that does not leave us enough—that takes from us as much when the season is bad as when it is good!'

"'But your assessment has not been increased, has it?'

"'No; we have concluded a settlement for twenty years upon the same footing as formerly.'

"'And if the sky were to shower down upon you pearls and diamonds, instead of water, the government would never demand more from you than the rate fixed upon?'

"'No.'

"'Then why should you expect remissions in bad seasons?'

"'It cannot be disputed that the *burkut* (blessing from above) is less under you than it used to be formerly, and that the lands yield less from our labour.'

"'True, my old friend, but do you know the reason why?'

"'No.'

"'Then I will tell you. Forty or fifty years ago, in what you call the times of the *burkut*, (blessing from above,) the cavalry of Seikh, freebooters from the Punjab, used to sweep over this fine plain, in which stands the said village from which you are all descended; and to massacre the whole population of some villages; and a certain portion of that of every other village; and the lands of those killed used to lie waste for want of cultivators. Is not this all true?'

"'Yes, quite true.'

"'And the fine groves which had been planted over this plain

by your ancestors, as they separated from the great parent stock, and formed independent villages and hamlets for themselves, were all swept away and destroyed by the same hordes of free-booters, from whom your poor imbecile emperors, cooped up in yonder large city of Delhi, were utterly unable to defend you?'

"'Quite true,' said the old man with a sigh. 'I remember when all this fine plain was as thickly studded with fine groves of mango-trees as Rohilcund, or any other part of India.'

"'You know that the land requires rest from labour, as well as men and bullocks; and that if you go on sowing wheat, and other exhausting crops, it will go on yielding less and less returns, and at last not be worth the tilling?'

"'Quite well.'

"'Then why do you not give the land rest by leaving it longer fallow, or by a more frequent alternation of crops relieve it?'

"'Because we have now increased so much, that we should not get enough to eat were we to leave it to fallow; and unless we tilled it with exhausting crops we should not get the means of paying our rents to government.'

"'The Seikh hordes in former days prevented this; they killed off a certain portion of your families, and gave the land the *rest* which you now refuse it. When you had exhausted one part, you found another recovered by a long fallow, so that you had better returns; but now that we neither kill you, nor suffer you to be killed by others, you have brought all the cultivable lands into tillage; and under the old system of cropping to exhaustion, it is not surprising that they yield you less returns.'

"By this time we had a crowd of people seated around us upon the ground, as I went on munching my parched grain and talking to the old patriarch. They all laughed at the old man at the conclusion of my last speech, and he confessed I was right.

"'This is all true, sir, but still your government is not considerate; it goes on taking kingdom after kingdom and adding to its dominions, without diminishing the burden upon us its old subjects. Here you have had armies away taking Affghanistan, but we shall not have one rupee the less to pay.'

"'True, my friend, nor would you demand a rupee less from

those honest cultivators around us, if we were to leave you all your lands untaxed. You complain of the government—they complain of you. [Here the circle around us laughed at the old man again.] Nor would you subdivide the lands the less for having it rent free; on the contrary, it would be every generation subdivided the more, inasmuch as there would be more of local ties, and a greater disinclination on the part of the members of families to separate and seek service abroad.'

"'True, sir, very true; that is, no doubt, a very great evil.'

"'And you know it is not an evil produced by us, but one arising out of your own laws of inheritance. You have heard, no doubt, that with us the eldest son gets the whole of the land, and the younger sons all go out in search of service, with such share as they can get of the other property of their father?'

"'Yes, sir; but where shall we get service—you have none to give us. I would serve to-morrow, if you would take me as a soldier,' said he, stroking his white whiskers.

"The crowd laughed heartily, and some wag observed, 'that perhaps I should think him too old.'

"'Well,' said the old man, smiling, 'the gentleman himself is not very young, and yet I dare say he is a good servant of his government.'

"This was paying me off for making the people laugh at his expense. 'True, my old friend,' said I, 'but I began to serve when I was young, and have been long learning.'

"'Very well,' said the old man; 'but I should be glad to serve the rest of my life upon a less salary than you got when you began to learn.'

"'Well, my friend, you complain of our government; but you must acknowledge that we do all we can to protect you, though it is true that we are often acting in the dark.'

"'Often, sir? you are always acting in the dark; you hardly any of you know any thing of what your revenue and police officers are doing; there is no justice or redress to be got without paying for it; and it is not often that those who pay can get it.'

"'True, my old friend, that is bad all over the world. You cannot presume to ask any thing even from the Deity himself,

without paying the priest who officiates in his temples; and if you should, you would none of you hope to get from your deity what you asked for.'

"Here the crowd laughed again, and one of them said 'that there was certainly this to be said for our government, that the European gentlemen themselves never took bribes, whatever those under them might do.'

"'You must not be too sure of that neither. Did not the Lal Beebee (red lady) get a bribe for soliciting the judge, her husband, to let go Ameer Sing, who had been confined in jail?'

"'How did this take place?'

"'About three years ago Ameer Sing was sentenced to imprisonment, and his friends spent a great deal of money in bribes to the native officers of the court, but all in vain. At last they were recommended to give a handsome present to the red lady. They did so, and Ameer Sing was released.'

"'But did they give the present into the lady's own hand?'

"'No, they gave it to one of her women.'

"'And how do you know that she ever gave it to her mistress, or that her mistress ever heard of the transaction?'

"'She might certainly have been acting without her mistress's knowledge; but the popular belief is, that Lal Beebee got the present.'

"I then told them the story of the affair at Jubbulpore, when Mrs. Smith's name had been used for a similar purpose, and the people around us were highly amused; and the old man's opinion of the transaction evidently underwent a change.*

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* "Some of Mr. Smith's servants entered into a combination to defraud a suitor in his court of a large sum of money, which he was to pay to Mrs. Smith as she walked in the garden. A dancing-girl from the town of Jubbulpore was made to represent Mrs. Smith, and a suit of Mrs. Smith's clothes were borrowed for her from the washerwoman. The butler took the suitor into the garden and introduced him to the supposed Mrs. Smith, who received him very graciously, and condescended to accept his offer of five thousand rupees in gold mohurs. The plot was afterward discovered, and the old butler,

"We became good friends, and the old man begged me to have my tents, which he supposed were coming up, pitched among them, that he might have an opportunity of showing that he was not a bad subject, though he grumbled against the government.

"The next day, at Meerut, I got a visit from the chief native judge, whose son, a talented youth, is in my office. Among other things, I asked him whether it might not be possible to improve the character of the police by increasing the salaries of the officers, and mentioned my conversation with the landholder.

"'Never, sir,' said the old gentleman; 'the man that now gets twenty-five rupees a month, is contented with making perhaps fifty or seventy-five more; and the people subject to his authority pay him accordingly. Give him a hundred, sir, and he will put a shawl over his shoulders, and the poor people will be obliged to pay him at a rate which will make up his income to four hundred. You will only alter his style of living, and make him a greater burden to the people; he will always take as long as he thinks he can with impunity.'

"'But do you not think that when people see a man adequately paid by government, they will the more readily complain at any attempt at unauthorized exactions?'

"'Not a bit, sir, as long as they see the same difficulties in the way of prosecuting them to conviction. In the administration of civil justice (the old gentleman is a civil judge) you may occasionally see your way, and understand what is doing; but in revenue and police you have never seen it in India, and never will, I think. The officers you employ will all add to their incomes by unauthorized means; and the lower their incomes, the less their pretensions, and the less the populace have to pay.'"

In the "History of the Possessions of the Honourable East India Company," by R. Montgomery Martin, F. S. S., the following statements occur:—

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washerwoman and all, were sentenced to labour in a rope on the roads."

"The following estimate has been made of the population of the allied and independent states:—Hydrabad, 10,000,000; Oude, 6,000,000; Nagpoor, 3,000,000; Mysore, 3,000,000; Sattara, 1,500,000; Gurckwar, 2,000,000; Travancore and Cochin, 1,000,000; Rajpootana, and various minor principalities, 16,500,000; Scindias territories, 4,000,000; the Seiks, 3,000,000; Nepál, 2,000,000; Cashmere, etc., 1,000,000; Scinde, 1,000,000; total, 51,000,000. This, of course, is but a rough estimate by Hamilton, (Slavery in British India.) For the last forty years the East India Company's government have been gradually, but safely, abolishing slavery throughout their dominions; they began in 1789 with putting down the maritime traffic, by prosecuting any person caught in exporting or importing slaves by sea, long before the British government abolished that infernal commerce in the Western world, and they have ever since sedulously sought the final extinction of that domestic servitude which had long existed throughout the East, as recognised by the Hindoo and Mohammedan law. In their despatches of 1798, it was termed '*an inhuman commerce and cruel traffic.*' French, Dutch, or Danish subjects captured within the limit of their dominions in the act of purchasing or conveying slaves were imprisoned and heavily fined, and every encouragement was given to their civil and military servants to aid in protecting the first rights of humanity.

"Mr. Robertson,* in reference to Cawnpore, observes:—'Domestic slavery exists; but of an agricultural slave I do not recollect a single instance. When I speak of *domestic* slavery, I mean that *status* which I must call slavery for want of any more accurate designation. It does not, however, resemble that which is understood in Europe to be slavery; it is the mildest species of servitude. The domestic slaves are certain persons purchased in times of scarcity; children purchased from their parents; they grow up in the family, and are almost entirely employed in domestic offices in the house; not liable to be resold.

"'There is a certain species of slavery in South Bahar, where

* Lords' Evidence, 1687.

a man mortgages his labour for a certain sum of money; and this species of slavery exists also in Arracan and Ava. It is for his life, or until he shall pay the sum, that he is obliged to labour for the person who lends him the money; and if he can repay the sum, he emancipates himself.

"'Masters have no power of punishment recognised by our laws. Whatever may be the provision of the Mohammedan or Hindoo codes to that effect, it is a dead letter, for we would not recognise it. The master doubtless may sometimes inflict domestic punishment; but if he does, the slave rarely thinks of complaining of it. Were he to do so his complaint would be received.' This, in fact, is the palladium of liberty in England.

"In Malabar, according to the evidence of Mr. Baber, slavery, as mentioned by Mr. Robertson, also exists, and perhaps the same is the case in Guzerat and to the north; but the wonder is, not that such is the case, but that it is so partial in extent, and fortunately so bad in character, approximating indeed so much toward the feudal state as to be almost beyond the reach as well as the necessity of laws which at present would be practically inoperative. The fact, that of 100,000,000 British inhabitants, [or allowing five to a family, 20,000,000 families,] upward of 16,000,000 are landed proprietors, shows to what a confined extent even domestic slavery exists. A commission has been appointed by the new charter to inquire into this important but delicate subject.'"

We have quoted this passage from a writer who is a determined advocate of every thing *British*, whether it be good or bad, in order to show by his own admission that chattel slavery, that is the precise form of slavery of which the British express such a holy horror, exists in British India under the sanction of British laws. Nor does it exist to a small extent only, as he would have us believe. It has always existed there, and must necessarily be on the increase, from the very cause

which he points out, viz. famine. No country in the world, thanks to British oppression, is so frequently and so extensively visited by famine as India; and as the natives can escape in many instances from starving to death by selling themselves, and can save their children by selling them into slavery, we can readily form an estimate of the great extent to which this takes place in cases of famine, where the people are perishing by thousands and tens of thousands. As to the statement that the government of the East India Company have been endeavouring to abolish this species of slavery, it proves any thing rather than a desire to benefit the natives of India. Chattel slaves are not desired by British subjects because the ownership of them involves the necessity of supporting them in sickness and old age. The kind of slavery which the British have imposed on the great mass of their East Indian subjects is infinitely more oppressive and inhuman than chattel slavery. Indeed it would not at all suit the views of the British aristocracy to have chattel slavery become so fashionable in India as to interfere with their own cherished system of political slavery, which is so extensively and successfully practised in England, Scotland, Ireland, and the West and East Indies. The money required for the support of chattel slaves could not be spared by the aristocratic governments in the colonies. The object is to take the fruits of the labourer's toil without providing for him at all.

When labourers are part of a master's capital, the better he provides for them the more they are worth. When they are not property, the character of their subsistence is of no importance; but they must yield the greater part of the results of their toil.

The "salt laws" of India are outrageously oppressive. An account of their operation will give the reader a taste of the character of the legislation to which the British have subjected conquered Hindoos. Such an account we find in a recent number of "Household Words," which Lord Shaftesbury and his associates in luxury and philanthropy should read more frequently than we can suppose they do:—

"Salt, in India, is a government monopoly. It is partially imported, and partially manufactured in government factories. These factories are situated in dreary marshes—the workers obtaining certain equivocal privileges, on condition of following their occupation in these pestiferous regions, where hundreds of these wretched people fall, annually, victims to the plague or the floods.

"The salt consumed in India must be purchased through the government, at a duty of upward of two pounds per ton, making the price to the consumer about eight pence per pound. In England, salt may be purchased by retail, three pounds, or wholesale, five pounds for one penny; while in India, upward of thirty millions of persons, whose average incomes do not amount to above three shillings per week, are compelled to expend one-fourth of that pittance in salt for themselves and families.

"It may naturally be inferred, that, with such a heavy duty upon this important necessary of life, that underhand measures are adopted by the poor natives for supplying themselves. We shall see, however, by the following severe regulations, that the

experiment is too hazardous to be often attempted. Throughout the whole country there are numerous 'salt chokies,' or police stations, the superintendents of which are invested with powers of startling and extraordinary magnitude.

"When information is lodged with such superintendent that salt is stored in any place without a '*ruwana*,' or permit, he proceeds to collect particulars of the description of the article, the quantity stated to be stored, and the name of the owner of the store. If the quantity stated to be stored exceeds seventy pounds, he proceeds with a body of police to make the seizure. If the door is not opened to him at once, he is invested with full power to break it open; and if the police-officers exhibit the least backwardness in assisting, or show any sympathy with the unfortunate owner, they are liable to be heavily fined. The owner of the salt, with all persons found upon the premises, are immediately apprehended, and are liable to six months' imprisonment for the first offence, twelve for the second, and eighteen months for the third; so that if a poor Indian was to see a shower of salt in his garden, (there *are* showers of salt sometimes,) and to attempt to take advantage of it without paying duty, he would become liable to this heavy punishment. The superintendent of police is also empowered to detain and search trading vessels, and if salt be found on board without a permit, the whole of the crew may be apprehended and tried for the offence. Any person erecting a distilling apparatus in his own house, merely to distil enough sea-water for the use of his household, is liable to such a fine as may ruin him. In this case, direct proof is not required, but inferred from circumstances at the discretion of the judge.

"If a person wishes to erect a factory upon his own estate, he must first give notice to the collector of revenue of all the particulars relative thereto, failing which, the collector may order all the works to be destroyed. Having given notice, officers are immediately quartered upon the premises, who have access to all parts thereof, for fear the company should be defrauded of the smallest amount of duty. When duty *is* paid upon any portion, the collector, upon giving a receipt, specifies the name and residence of the person to whom it is to be delivered, to whom it

*must* be delivered within a stated period, or become liable to fresh duty. To wind up, and make assurance doubly sure, the police may seize and detain any load or package which may pass the stations, till they are satisfied such load or package does not contain contraband salt.

"Such are the salt laws of India; such the monopoly by which a revenue of three millions sterling is raised; and such the system which, in these days of progress and improvement, acts as an incubus upon the energies, the mental resources, and social advancement of the immense population of India.

"Political economists of all shades of opinion—men who have well studied the subject—deliberately assert that nothing would tend so much toward the improvement of that country, and to a more complete development of its vast natural resources, than the abolition of these laws; and we can only hope, without blaming any one, that at no distant day a more enlightened policy will pervade the councils of the East India Company, and that the poor Hindoo will be emancipated from the thraldom of these odious enactments.

"But apart from every other consideration, there is one, in connection with the Indian salt-tax, which touches the domestic happiness and vital interest of every inhabitant in Great Britain. It is decided, by incontrovertible medical testimony, that cholera (whose ravages every individual among us knows something, alas! too well about) is in a great measure engendered, and its progress facilitated, by the prohibitory duties on salt in India, the very cradle of the pestilence. Our precautionary measures to turn aside the plague from our doors, appear to be somewhat ridiculous, while the plague itself is suffered to exist, when it might be destroyed—its existence being tolerated only to administer to the pecuniary advantage of a certain small class of the community. Let the medical men of this country look to it. Let the people of this country generally look to it; for there is matter for grave and solemn consideration, both nationally and individually, in the Indian salt-tax."

Yes, the salt-tax is very oppressive; but it *pays*

those who authorized its assessment, and that is sufficient for them. When they discover some means of obtaining its equivalent—some oppression quite as cruel but not so obvious—we may expect to hear of the abolition of the odious salt monopoly.

Famines (always frightfully destructive in India) have become more numerous than ever, under the blighting rule of the British aristocrats. Vast tracts of country, once the support of busy thousands, have been depopulated by these dreadful visitations.

"The soil seems to lie under a curse. Instead of yielding abundance for the wants of its own population and the inhabitants of other regions, it does not keep in existence its own children. It becomes the burying-place of millions who die upon its bosom crying for bread. In proof of this, turn your eyes backward upon the scenes of the past year. Go with me into the North-west provinces of the Bengal presidency, and I will show you the bleaching skeletons of five hundred thousand human beings, who perished of hunger in the space of a few short months. Yes, died of hunger, in what has been justly called the granary of the world. Bear with me, if I speak of the scenes which were exhibited during the prevalence of this famine. The air for miles was poisoned by the effluvia emitted from the putrefying bodies of the dead. The rivers were choked with the corpses thrown into their channels. Mothers cast their little ones beneath the rolling waves, because they would not see them draw their last gasp and feel them stiffen in their arms. The English in the cities were prevented from taking their customary evening drives. Jackals and vultures approached, and fastened upon the bodies of men, women, and children before life was extinct. Madness, disease, despair stalked abroad, and no human power present to arrest their progress. It was the carnival of death. And this occurred in British India—in the reign of Victoria the

First. Nor was the event extraordinary and unforeseen. Far from it: 1835–36 witnessed a famine in the Northern provinces; 1833 beheld one to the eastward; 1822–23 saw one in the Deccan."

The above extract from one of George Thompson's "Lectures on India," conveys an idea of the horrors of a famine in that country. What then must be the guilt of that government that adopts such measures as tend to increase the frequency and swell the horror of these scenes! By draining the resources of the people, and dooming them to the most pinching poverty, the British conquerors have greatly increased the dangers of the visitations of famine, and opened to it a wide field for destruction. The poor Hindoos may be said to live face to face with starvation. The following account of the famine of 1833 is given by Colonel Sleeman, in his "Rambles and Recollections:"—

"During the famine of 1833, as on all similar occasions, grain of every kind, attracted by high prices, flowed up in large streams from this favoured province (Malwa) toward Bundelcund; and the population of Bundelcund, as usual in such times of dearth and scarcity, flowed off toward Malwa against the stream of supply, under the assurance that the nearer they got to the source the greater would be their chance of employment and subsistence. Every village had its numbers of the dead and the dying; and the roads were all strewed with them; but they were mostly concentrated upon the great towns, and civil and military stations, where subscriptions were open for their support by both the European and native communities. The funds arising from these subscriptions lasted till the rain had fairly set in, when all able-bodied persons could easily find employment in tillage among the agri-

cultural communities of the villages around. After the rains have fairly set in, the *sick* and *helpless* only should be kept concentrated upon large towns and stations, where little or no employment is to be found; for the oldest and youngest of those who are able to work can then easily find employment in weeding the cotton, rice, sugar-cane, and other fields under autumn crops, and in preparing the land for the reception of the wheat, grain, and other spring seeds; and get advances from the farmers, agricultural capitalists, and other members of the village communities, who are all glad to share their superfluities with the distressed, and to pay liberally for the little service they are able to give in return.

"At large places, where the greater numbers are concentrated, the scene becomes exceedingly distressing, for in spite of the best dispositions and greatest efforts on the part of government and its officers, and the European and native communities, thousands commonly die of starvation. At Saugor, mothers, as they lay in the streets unable to walk, were seen holding up their infants, and imploring the passing stranger to take them in slavery, that they might at least live—hundreds were seen creeping into gardens, courtyards, and old ruins, concealing themselves under shrubs, grass, mats, or straw, where they might die quietly, without having their bodies torn by birds and beasts before the breath had left them! Respectable families, who left home in search of the favoured land of Malwa, while yet a little property remained, finding all exhausted, took opium rather than beg, and husband, wife, and children died in each other's arms! Still more of such families lingered on in hope until all had been expended; then shut their doors, took poison, and died all together, rather than expose their misery, and submit to the degradation of begging. All these things I have myself known and seen; and in the midst of these and a hundred other harrowing scenes which present themselves on such occasions, the European cannot fail to remark the patient resignation with which the poor people submit to their fate; and the absence of almost all those revolting acts which have characterized the famines of which he has read in other countries—such as the living feeding on the dead, and mothers devouring their own children. No such things are witnessed in Indian famines;

here all who suffer attribute the disaster to its real cause, the want of rain in due season; and indulge in no feelings of hatred against their rulers, superiors, or more fortunate equals in society, who happen to live beyond the influence of such calamities. They gratefully receive the superfluities which the more favoured are always found ready to share with the afflicted in India; and though their sufferings often subdue the strongest of all pride—the pride of caste, they rarely ever drive people to acts of violence. The stream of emigration, guided as it always is by that of the agricultural produce flowing in from the more favoured countries, must necessarily concentrate upon the communities along the line it takes a greater number of people than they have the means of relieving, however benevolent their dispositions; and I must say, that I have never either seen or read of a nobler spirit than seems to animate all classes of these communities in India on such distressing occasions."

The same writer has some judicious general remarks upon the causes of famine in India, which are worthy of quotation. We have only to add, that whatever may be found in the climate and character of the country that expose the people to the frequency of want, the conquerors have done their best to aggravate natural evils:—

"In India, unfavourable seasons produce much more disastrous consequences than in Europe. In England, not more than one-fourth of the population derive their incomes from the cultivation of the land around them. Three-fourths of the people have incomes, independent of the annual returns from those lands; and with these incomes they can purchase agricultural produce from other lands when the crops upon them fail. The farmers, who form so large a portion of the fourth class, have stock equal in value to *four times the amount of the annual rent of their lands.* They have also a great variety of crops; and it is very rare that more than

one or two of them fail, or are considerably affected, the same season. If they fail in one district or province, the deficiency is very easily supplied to people who have equivalents to give for the produce of another. The sea, navigable rivers, fine roads, all are open and ready at all times for the transport of the superabundance of one quarter to supply the deficiencies of another. In India the reverse of all this is unhappily everywhere to be found; more than three-fourths of the whole population are engaged in the cultivation of the land, and depend upon its annual returns for subsistence. The farmers and cultivators have none of them stock equal in value to more than *half the amount of the annual rents of their lands*. They have a great variety of crops; but all are exposed to the same accidents, and commonly fail at the same time. The autumn crops are sown in June and July, and ripen in October and November; and if seasonable showers do not fall in July, August, and September, all fail. The spring crops are sown in October and November, and ripen in March; and if seasonable showers do not happen to fall during December or January, all, save what are artificially irrigated, fail. If they fail in one district or province, the people have few equivalents to offer for a supply of land produce from any other. Their roads are scarcely anywhere passable for wheeled carriages at *any season*, and nowhere *at all seasons*—they have nowhere a navigable canal, and only in one line a navigable river. Their land produce is conveyed upon the backs of bullocks, that move at the rate of six or eight miles a day, and add one hundred per cent. to the cost for every hundred miles they carry it in the best seasons, and more than two hundred in the worst. What in Europe is felt merely as a *dearth*, becomes in India, under all these disadvantages, a *scarcity*; and what is there a *scarcity* becomes here a famine."

Another illustration of the truth that poverty is the source of crime and depravity is found in India. Statistics and the evidence of recent travellers show that the amount of vice in the different provinces is just in

proportion to the length of time they have been under British rule. No stronger proof of the iniquity of the government—of its poisonous tendencies as well as positive injustice—could be adduced.

The cultivation and exportation of the pernicious drug, opium, which destroys hundreds of thousands of lives annually, have latterly been prominent objects of the East Indian government. The best tracts of land in India were chosen for the cultivation of the poppy. The people were told that they must either raise this plant, make opium, or give up their land. Furthermore, those who produced the drug were compelled to sell it to the Company. In the Bengal Presidency, the monopoly of the government is complete. It has its establishment for the manufacture of the drug. There are two great agencies at Ghazeepore and Patna, for the Benares and Bahar provinces. Each opium agent has several deputies in different districts, and a native establishment. They enter into contracts with the cultivator for the supply of opium at a rate fixed to suit the demand. The land-revenue authorities do not interfere, except to prevent cultivation without permission. The land cultivated is measured, and all the produce must be sold to the government. At the head agency the opium is packed in chests and sealed with the Company's seal.*

* Campbell's Modern India.

The imperial government of China, seeing that the traffic in opium was sowing misery and death among its subjects, prohibited the introduction of the drug within the empire in 1839. But the British had a vast amount of capital at stake, and the profits of the trade were too great to be relinquished for any considerations of humanity. War was declared; thousands of Chinese were slaughtered, and the imperial government forced to permit the destructive traffic on a more extensive scale than ever, and to pay $2,000,000 besides for daring to protest against it!

The annual revenue now realized from the opium traffic amounts to £3,500,000. It is estimated that about 400,000 Chinese perish every year in consequence of using the destructive drug, while the amount of individual and social misery proceeding from the same cause is appalling to every humane heart. Among the people of India who have been forced into the cultivation and manufacture of opium, the use of it has greatly increased under the fostering care of the government. The Company seems to be aware that a people enervated by excessive indulgence will make little effort to throw off the chains of slavery. Keep the Hindoo drunk with opium and he will not rebel.

The effects of this drug upon the consumer are thus described by a distinguished Chinese scholar:—"It exhausts the animal spirits, impedes the regular performance of business, wastes the the flesh and blood,

dissipates every kind of property, renders the person ill-favoured, promotes obscenity, discloses secrets, violates the laws, attacks the vitals, and destroys life." This statement is confirmed by other natives, and also by foreign residents; and it is asserted that, as a general rule, a person does not live more than ten years after becoming addicted to the use of this drug.

The recent Burmese war had for one of its objects the opening of a road to the interior of China, for the purpose of extending the opium trade. And for such an object thousands of brave Burmese were slaughtered, fertile and beautiful regions desolated, and others subjected to the peculiar slave-system of the East India Company. The extension of British dominion and the accumulation of wealth in British hands, instead of the spread of Christianity and the development of civilization, mark all the measures of the Company.

William Howitt, one of the ablest as well as the most democratic writers of England, thus confirms the statements made above:—

"The East India Company exists by monopolies of the land, of opium, and of salt. By their narrow, greedy, and purblind management of these resources, they have contrived to reduce that once affluent country to the uttermost depths of poverty and pauperism. The people starve and perish in famine every now and then by half a million at a time. One-third of that superb peninsula is reduced to waste and jungle. While other colonies pay from twenty to thirty shillings per head of revenue, India yields only four shillings per head. The income of the govern-

ment at the last renewal of the charter was *twenty millions;* it is now reduced to about *seventeen millions;* and even to raise this, they have been obliged to double the tax on salt. The debt was *forty millions;* it is now said to be augmented by constant war, and the payment of the dividends, which, whatever the real proceeds, are always kept up to the usual height, to *seventy millions.* This is a state of things which cannot last. It is a grand march toward financial inanition. It threatens, if not arrested by the voice of the British people, the certain and no very distant loss of India.

"We have some glimpses of the treatment of the people in the collection of the land-tax, as it is called, but really the rent. The government claims not the mere right of governing, but, as conquerors, the fee-simple of the land. Over the greater part of India there are no real freeholders. The land is the Company's, and they collect, not a tax, but a rent. They have their collectors all over India, who go and say as the crops stand, 'We shall take so much of this.' It is seldom less than one-half—it is more commonly sixty, seventy, and eighty per cent! This is killing the goose to come at the golden egg. It drives the people to despair; they run away and leave the land to become jungle; they perish by famine in thousands and tens of thousands.

"This is why no capitalists dare to settle and grow for us cotton, or manufacture for us sugar. There is no security—no fixity of taxation. It is one wholesale system of arbitrary plunder, such as none but a conquered country in the first violence of victorious license ever was subjected to. But this system has here continued more than a generation; the country is reduced by it to a fatal condition—the only wonder is that we yet retain it at all.

"The same system is pursued in the opium monopoly. The finest lands are taken for the cultivation of the poppy; the government give the natives what they please for the opium, often about as many shillings as they get paid for it guineas per pound, and ship it off to curse China with it. 'In India,' says a writer in the Chinese Repository, 'the extent of territory occupied with the poppy, and the amount of population engaged in its cultivation

and the preparation of opium, are far greater than in any other part of the world.'

"Turkey is said to produce only 2000 chests of opium annually; India produces 40,000 of 134 lbs. each, and yielding a revenue of about £4,000,000 sterling.

"But perhaps worse than all is the salt monopoly. It is well known that the people of India are a vegetable diet people. Boiled rice is their chief food, and salt is an absolute necessary of life. With a vegetable diet in that hot climate, without plenty of salt, putrid diseases and rapid mortality are inevitable. Nature, or Providence, has therefore given salt in abundance. The sea throws it up already crystallized in many places; in others it is prepared by evaporation; but the Company steps in and imposes *two hundred per cent.* on this indispensable article, and guards it by such penalties that the native dare not stoop to gather it when it lies at his feet. The consequence is that mortality prevails, to a terrific extent often, among the population. Officers of government are employed to destroy the salt naturally formed; and government determines how much salt shall be annually consumed.

"Now, let the people of England mark one thing. *The cholera originates in the East.* It has visited us once, and is on its march once more toward us. We have heard through the newspapers of its arrival in Syria, in Turkey, in Russia, at Vienna. In a few months it will probably be again among us.

"*Has any one yet imagined that this scourge may possibly be the instrument of Divine retribution for our crimes and cruelties?* Has any one imagined that we have any thing to do with the creation of this terrible pestilence? Yet there is little, there is scarcely the least doubt, that this awful instrument of death is occasioned by this very monopoly of salt—that it is the direct work of the four-and-twenty men in Leadenhall-street. The cholera is found to arise in the very centre of India. It commences in the midst of this swarming population, which subsists on vegetables, and which is deprived by the British government of the necessary salt! In that hot climate it acquires a deadly strength—thousands perish by it as by the stroke of lightning, and it hence

radiates over the globe, travelling at the speed of a horse in full gallop. Thus it is that God visits our deeds upon our heads.

"Such is a brief glance at the mal-administration, the abuse, and the murderous treatment of India, permitted by great and Christian England to a knot of mere money-making traders. We commit the lives and happiness of one hundred and fifty millions of souls —the well-being, and probably the chance of retention, of one of the finest countries in the world, and the comfort and prosperity of every human creature in Great Britain, to the hands of those who are only, from day to day, grasping at the vitals of this glorious Eastern region to increase their dividends. This is bad enough, but this is not all. As if we had given them a charter in the most effectual manner to damage our dominions and blast all our prospects of trade, we have allowed these four-and-twenty men of Leadenhall-street not only to cripple India, but to exasperate and, as far as possible, close China against us. Two millions of people in India and three millions of people in China—all waiting for our manufactures, all capable of sending us the comforts and necessaries that we need—it would seem that to us, a nation especially devoted to trade, as if Providence had opened all the gorgeous and populous East to employ and to enrich us. One would have thought that every care and anxiety would have been aroused to put ourselves on the best footing with this swarming region. It has been the last thing thought of.

"The men of Leadenhall-street have been permitted, after having paralyzed India, to send to China not the articles that the Chinese wanted, but the very thing of all others that its authorities abhorred—that is, opium.

"It is well known with what assiduity these traders for years thrust this deadly drug into the ports of China; or it may be known from 'Medhurst's China,' from 'Thelwall's Iniquities of the Opium Trade,' from 'Montgomery Martin's Opium in China,' and various other works. It is well known what horrors, crimes, ruin of families, and destruction of individuals the rage of opium-smoking introduced among the millions of the Celestial Empire. Every horror, every species of reckless desperation, social depravity, and sensual crime, spread from the practice and

overran China as a plague. The rulers attempted to stop the evil by every means in their power. They enacted the severest punishments for the sale of it. These did not avail. They augmented the punishment to death. Without a stop to it the whole framework of society threatened to go to pieces. 'Opium,' says the Imperial edict itself, 'coming from the distant regions of barbarians, has pervaded the country with its baneful influence.' The opium-smoker would steal, sell his property, his children, the mother of his children, and finally commit murder for it. The most ghastly spectacles were everywhere seen; instead of healthy and happy men, the most repulsive scenes. 'I visited one of the opium-houses,' said an individual quoted by Sir Robert Inglis, in the House of Commons, in 1843, 'and shall I tell you what I saw in this antechamber of hell? I thought it impossible to find anything worse than the results of drinking ardent spirits; but I have succeeded in finding something far worse. I saw Malays, Chinese, men and women, old and young, in one mass, in one common herd, wallowing in their filth, beastly, sensual, devilish, and this under the eyes of a Christian government.'

"They were these abominations and horrors that the Emperor of China determined to arrest. They were these which our East India Company determined to perpetuate for this base gain. When the emperor was asked to license the sale of opium, as he could not effect its exclusion, and thus make a profit of it, what was his reply? '*It is true I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison. Gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes, but nothing will induce me to derive a benefit from the vice and misery of my people.*'

"These were the sentiments of the Chinese monarch; what was the conduct of the so-called Christian Englishmen? They determined to go on poisoning and demoralizing China, till they provoked the government to war, and then massacred the people to compel the continuance of the sale of opium."

Howitt evidently has as ardent a sympathy for those who have suffered from the tyranny of British rule as

Edmund Burke himself. The wholesale degradation of the Hindoos, which has resulted from the measures of the East India Company, calls loudly indeed for the denunciations of indignant humanity. The crime must have its punishment. The ill-gotten gains of the Company should be seized to carry out an ameliorating policy, and all concerned in enforcing the system of oppression should be taught that justice is not to be wounded with impunity.

The burdens imposed upon the Hindoos are precisely of the character and extent of those that have reduced Ireland to poverty and her people to slavery. Besides the enormous rents, which are sufficient of themselves to dishearten the tillers of the soil, the British authorities seem to have exhausted invention in devising taxes. So dear a price to live was never paid by any people except the Irish. What remains to the cultivator when the rent of the land and almost forty different taxes are paid?

Those Hindoos who wish to employ capital or labour in any other way than in cultivation of land are deterred by the formidable array of taxation. The chief taxes are styled the Veesabuddy, or tax on merchants, traders, and shopkeepers; the Mohturfa, or tax on weavers, carpenters, stonecutters, and other mechanical trades; and the Bazeebab, consisting of smaller taxes annually rented out to the highest bidder. The proprietor of the Bazeebab is thus constituted a petty chief-

tain, with power to exact fees at marriages and religious ceremonies; to inquire into and fine the misconduct of females in families, and other misdemeanours—in fact, petty tyrants, who can at all times allege engagements to the government to justify extortion.* These proprietors are the worst kind of slaveholders.

The mode of settling the Mohturfa on looms is remarkable for the precision of its exaction. Every circumstance of the weaver's family is considered; the number of days which he devotes to his loom, the number of his children, the assistance which he receives from them, and the number and quality of the pieces which he can produce in a year; so that, let him exert himself as he will, his industry will always be taxed to the highest degree.† This method is so detailed that the servants of the government cannot enter into it, and the assessment of the tax is therefore left to the heads of the villages. It is impossible for a weaver to know what he is to pay to the government for being allowed to carry on his business till the yearly demand is made. If he has worked hard, and turned out one or two pieces of cloth more than he did the year before, his tax is increased. The more industrious he is the more he is forced to pay.

The tax-gatherers are thorough inquisitors. According to Rikards, upward of seventy different kinds of

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* Rikards. † Collector's Report.

buildings—the houses, shops, or warehouses of different castes and professions—were ordered to be entered into the survey accounts; besides the following implements of professions, which were usually assessed to the public revenue, viz.: "Oil-mills, iron manufactory, toddy-drawer's stills, potter's kiln, washerman's stone, goldsmith's tools, sawyer's saw, toddy-drawer's knives, fishing-nets, barber's hones, blacksmith's anvils, pack-bullocks, cocoa-nut safe, small fishing-boats, cotton-beater's bow, carpenter's tools, large fishing-boats, looms, salt-storehouses. If a landlord objects to the assessment on trees, as old and past bearing, they are, one and all, ordered to be cut down—a measure as ridiculous as unjust—as it not only inflicts injury upon the landlord, but takes away the chance of future profit for the government. Mr. Rikards bears witness, as a collector of Malabar, that lands and produce were sometimes inserted in the survey account which absolutely did not exist, while other lands were assessed to the revenue at more than their actual produce. From all this, it is obvious that the Hindoo labourer or artisan is the slave of the tax-collector, who, moreover, has no interest in the life of his victim.

Labour being almost "dirt cheap" in India, whenever speculating companies of Englishmen wish to carry out any particular scheme for which labourers are required, they hire a number of Hindoo Coolies, induce them to visit any port of the country, and treat them abomi-

nably, knowing that the poor wretches have no protection. The operations of the Assam Tea Company illustrate this practice:—

"An inconsiderate expenditure of capital placed the Assam Tea Company in great jeopardy, and at one time it was feared the scheme would be abandoned. The number of managers and assistants appointed by the Assam Company to carry on their affairs and superintend their tea gardens, on large salaries, was quite unnecessary; one or two experienced European superintendents to direct the native establishment would have answered every purpose. A vast number of Coolies (or labourers) were induced to proceed to Upper Assam to cultivate the gardens; but bad arrangements having been made to supply them with proper, wholesome food, many were seized with sickness. On their arrival at the tea-plantations, in the midst of high and dense tree jungle, numbers absconded, and others met an untimely end. The rice served out to the Coolies from the Assam Tea Company's storerooms, was so bad as not to be fit to be given to elephants, much less to human beings. The loss of these labourers, who had been conveyed to Upper Assam at a great expense, deprived the company of the means of cultivating so great an extent of country as would otherwise have been insured; for the scanty population of Upper Assam offered no means of replacing the deficiency of hands. Nor was the improvidence of the company in respect to labourers the only instance of their mismanagement. Although the company must have known that they had no real use or necessity for a steamer, a huge vessel was nevertheless purchased, and frequently sent up and down the Burrampooter river from Calcutta; carrying little else than a few thousand rupees for the payment of their establishment in Upper Assam, which might have been transmitted through native bankers, and have saved the company a most lavish and unprofitable expenditure of capital."*

* Sketch of Assam.

Ay, and the expense is all that is thought worthy of consideration. The miserable victims to the measures of the company might perish like brutes without being even pitied.

On the verge of starvation, as so many of the Hindoo labourers generally are, it does not excite surprise that they are very ready to listen to the offers of those who are engaged in the "Cooley slave-trade." In addition to the astounding facts given by us in the previous chapter, in regard to this traffic in men, we quote the following from the London Spectator of October, 1838:—

"Under Lord Glenelg's patronage, the Eastern slave-trade prospers exceedingly. The traffic in Hill Coolies promises to become one of the most extensive under the British flag. A cargo arrived in Berbice about the beginning of May, in prime condition: and the Berbice Advertiser, one of the most respectable of the West India journals, states, that out of 289, conveyed in the Whitby, only eight died on the passage, and very few were ill. Only one circumstance was wanting to make them the happiest of human (?) beings—only eight women were sent as companions for the 280 men; and the deficiency of females was the more to be regretted because it was 'probable they would be shunned by the negroes from jealousy and speaking a different language.'

"The same newspaper contains a very curious document respecting the Hill Cooley traffic. It is a circular letter, dated the 8th January, 1838, from Henley, Dowson, and Bethel, of Calcutta, the agents most extensively engaged in the shipment of labourers from India to the Mauritius and British Guiana. These gentlemen thus state their claims to preference over other houses in the same business:—

"'We have within the last two years procured and shipped upward of 5000 free agricultural labourers for our friends at Mau-

ritius; and, from the circumstance of nearly 500 of the number being employed on estates in which we possess a direct interest, we can assure you that a happier and more contented labouring population is seldom to be met with in any part of the world, than the Dhargas or mountain tribes sent from this vast country.'

"Five thousand within two years to the Mauritius alone! This is pretty well, considering that the trade is in its infancy. As to the statement of the happiness and contentment of the labourers, rather more impartial evidence than the good word of the exporters of the commodity advertised would be desirable. If Englishmen could fancy themselves Hill Coolies for an instant—landed in Berbice, in the proportion of 280 men to 8 of the gentler sex, 'speaking a different language,' and shunned by the very negroes—we are inclined to think they would not, even in that imaginary and momentary view, conceit themselves to be among the happiest of mankind.

"We proceed with the Calcutta circular:—

"'The labourers hitherto procured by us have cost their employers, *landed at the Mauritius*, about one hundred rupees (or 10*l.* sterling) per man; which sum comprises six months' advance of wages, provisions and water for the voyage, clothing, commission, passage, insurance, and all incidental charges.'

"'The expense attending the shipment of Indian labourers to the West India Colonies would be necessarily augmented—firstly, by the higher rate of passage-money, and the increased quantity of provisions and water; and, secondly, from the necessity of making arrangements, indispensable to the health and comfort of native passengers, on a voyage of so long a duration, in the course of which they would be exposed to great vicissitude of climate.

"'On making ample allowance for these charges, we do not apprehend that a labourer, sent direct from this country to Demerara, and engaged to work on your estates for a period of five consecutive years, would cost, landed there, above two hundred and ten rupees, or 21*l.* sterling.'

"This sum of 210 rupees includes *six months' wages*—at what rate does the reader suppose? Why, five rupees, or ten shillings

sterling a month—half-a-crown a week—in Demerara! The passage is 10*l.*, and the insurance 12*s.*; for they are insured at so much a head, like pigs or sheep.

"It is manifest that after their arrival in Demerara, the Indians will not, unless on compulsion, work for five years at the rate of 10*s.* a month, while the negroes receive much higher wages. They are therefore placed under strict control, and are just as much slaves as the Redemptioners, whom the virtuous Quakers inveigled into Pennsylvania a century or more ago. The Indians bind themselves to work in town or country, wherever their consignee or master may choose to employ them. One of the articles of their agreement is this:—

"'In order that the undersigned natives of India may be fully aware of the engagement they undertake, it is hereby notified, that they will be required to do *all such work as the object for which they are engaged necessitates;* and that, as labourers attached to an estate, they will be required to clear forest and extract timber, carry manure, dig and prepare land for planting, also to take charge of horses, mules, and cattle of every description; *in short, to do all such work as an estate for the cultivation of sugar-cane and the manufacture of sugar demands,* or any branch of agriculture to which they may be destined.'

"In case of disobedience or misconduct—that is, at the caprice of the master—they may be 'degraded,' and sent back at their own charge to Calcutta. They are to receive no wages during illness; and a rupee a month is to be deducted from their wages—thereby reducing them to 2*s.* a week—as an indemnity-fund for the cost of sending them back. What security there is for the kind treatment of the labourers does not appear: there is nothing in the contract but a promise to act equitably.

"Now, in what respect do these men differ in condition from negro slaves, except very much for the worse? They must be more helpless than the negroes—if for no other reason, because of their ignorance of the language their masters use. They will not, for a long period certainly, be formidable from their numbers. How easily may even the miserable terms of the contract with their employers be evaded! Suppose the Indian works steadily

for four years, it may suit his master to describe him as refractory and idle during the fifth, and then he will be sent back at his own cost; and the whole of his earnings may be expended in paying for his passage to Calcutta, where, after all, he is a long way from home.

"It is impossible to contemplate without pain the inevitable lot of these helpless beings; but the conduct of the government, which could sanction the infamous commerce of which the Hill Cooley will be the victims, while professing all the while such a holy horror of dealing in negroes, should rouse general indignation.

Is it only a certain shade of black, and a peculiar physical conformation, which excites the compassion of the Anti-Slavery people? If it is cruelty, oppression, and fraud which they abhor and desire to prevent, then let them renew their agitation in behalf of the kidnapped natives of India, now suffering, probably more acutely, all that made the lot of the negro a theme for eloquence and a field for Christian philanthropy."

This is written in the right spirit. The trade described has increased to an extent which calls for the interference of some humane power. Should the British government continue to sanction the traffic, it must stand responsible for a national crime.

Oppressive and violent as the British dominion in India undoubtedly is, the means devised to extend it are even more worthy of strong condemnation. The government fixes its eyes upon a certain province, where the people are enjoying peace and plenty, and determines to get possession of it. The Romans themselves were not more fertile in pretences for forcible seizure of territory than these British plunderers. They quickly hunt up a pretender to the throne, support his claims

with a powerful army, make him their complete tool, dethrone the lawful sovereign, and extend their authority over the country. The course pursued toward Afghanistan in 1838 illustrates this outrageous violation of national rights.

The following account of the origin and progress of the Afghanistan war is given by an English writer in the Penny Magazine:—

"In 1747, Ahmeed Shah, an officer of an Afghan troop in the service of Persia, refounded the Afghan monarchy, which was maintained until the death of his successor in 1793. Ahmeed was of the Douranee tribe, and the limits over which his sway extended is spoken of as the Douranee empire. Four of the sons of Ahmeed's successor disputed, and in turn possessed, the throne; and during this civil war several of the principal chiefs threw off their allegiance, and the Douranee empire ceased to exist, but was split up into the chiefships of Candahar, Herat, Caboul, and Peshawur. Herat afterward became a dependency of Persia, and Shah Shooja ool Moolook, the chief of Peshawur, lost his power after having enjoyed it for about six years. Dost Mohammed Kahn, the chief of Caboul, according to the testimony of the late Sir Alexander Burnes, writing in 1832, governed his territory with great judgment, improved its internal administration and resources, and became the most powerful chief in Afghanistan. Shah Shooja was for many years a fugitive and a pensioner of the British government. He made one unsuccessful attempt to regain his territory, but Peshawur eventually became a tributary to the ruler of the Punjab. Such was the state of Afghanistan in 1836.

"In the above year the Anglo-Indian government complained that Dost Mohammed Khan, chief of Caboul, had engaged in schemes of aggrandizement which threatened the stability of the British frontier in India; and Sir Alexander Burnes, who was

sent with authority to represent to him the light in which his proceedings were viewed, was compelled to leave Caboul without having effected any change in his conduct. The siege of Herat, and the support which both Dost Mohammed and his brother, the chief of Candahar, gave to the designs of Persia in Afghanistan, the latter chief especially openly assisting the operations against Herat, created fresh alarm in the Anglo-Indian government as to the security of our frontier. Several minor chiefs also avowed their attachment to the Persians. As our policy, instead of hostility, required an ally capable of resisting aggression on the western frontier of India, the Governor-general, from whose official papers we take these statements, 'was satisfied,' after serious and mature deliberation, 'that a pressing necessity, as well as every consideration of policy and justice, warranted us in espousing the cause of Shah Shooja ool Moolk;' and it was determined to place him on the throne. According to the Governor-general, speaking from the best authority, the testimony as to Shah Shooja's popularity was unanimous. In June, 1838, the late Sir William Macnaghten formed a tripartite treaty with the ruler of the Punjab and Shah Shooja; the object of which was to restore the latter to the throne of his ancestors. This policy it was conceived would conduce to the general freedom and security of commerce, the restoration of tranquillity upon the most important frontier of India, and the erection of a lasting barrier against hostile intrigue and encroachment; and, while British influence would thus gain its proper footing among the nations of Central Asia, the prosperity of the Afghan people would be promoted.

"Troops were despatched from the Presidencies of Bengal and Bombay to co-operate with the contingents raised by the Shah and our other ally, the united force being intended to act together under the name of the 'Army of the Indus.' After a march of extraordinary length, through countries which had never before been traversed by British troops, and defiles which are the most difficult passes in the world, where no wheeled carriage had ever been, and where it was necessary for the engineers in many places to construct roads before the baggage could proceed, the combined forces from Bengal and Bombay reached Candahar in May,

1839. According to the official accounts, the population were enthusiastic in welcoming the return of Shah Shooja. The next step was to advance toward Ghiznee and Caboul. On the 23d July, the strong and important fortress and citadel of Ghiznee, regarded throughout Asia as impregnable, was taken in two hours by blowing up the Caboul gate. The army had only been forty-eight hours before the place. An 'explosion party' carried three hundred pounds of gunpowder in twelve sand-bags, with a hose seventy-two feet long, the train was laid and fired, the party having just time to reach a tolerable shelter from the effects of the concussion, though one of the officers was injured by its force. On the 7th of August the army entered Caboul. Dost Mohammed had recalled his son Mohammed Akhbar from Jellalabad with the troops guarding the Khyber Pass, and their united forces amounted to thirteen thousand men; but these troops refused to advance, and Dost Mohammed was obliged to take precipitate flight, accompanied only by a small number of horsemen. Shah Shooja made a triumphant entry into Caboul, and the troops of Dost Mohammed tendered their allegiance to him. The official accounts state that in his progress toward Caboul he was joined by every person of rank and influence in the country. As the tribes in the Bolan Pass committed many outrages and murders on the followers of the army of the Indus, at the instigation of their chief, the Khan of Khelat, his principal town (Khelat) was taken on the 13th of November, 1839. The political objects of the expedition had now apparently been obtained. The hostile chiefs of Caboul and Candahar were replaced by a friendly monarch. On the side of Scinde and Herat, British alliance and protection were courted. All this had been accomplished in a few months, but at an expense said to exceed three millions sterling."

The *expense* of national outrage is only of importance to the sordid and unprincipled men who conceived and superintended the Afghanistan expedition. In the first part of the above extract, the writer places the British government in the position of one who strikes in self-

defence. It was informed that Dost Mohammed entertained schemes of invasion dangerous to the British supremacy—informed by the exiled enemy of the chief of Caboul. The information was seasonable and exceedingly useful. Straightway a treaty was formed, by which the British agreed to place their tool for the enslavement of the Afghans upon the throne from which he had been driven. Further on, it is said, that when Shah Sooja appeared in Afghanistan he was joined by every person of rank and influence in the country. Just so; and the followers and supporters of Dost Mohammed nearly all submitted to the superior army of the British general. But two years afterward, the strength of the patriotic party was seen, when Caboul rose against Shah Sooja, drove him again from the throne, and defeated and massacred a considerable British garrison. Shah Sooja was murdered soon afterward. But the British continued the war against the Afghans, with the object of reducing them to the same slavery under which the remainder of Hindostan was groaning. The violation of national rights, the massacre of thousands, and the enslavement of millions were the glorious aims of British policy in the Afghan expedition. The policy then carried out has been more fully illustrated since that period. Whenever a territory was thought desirable by the government, neither national rights, the principles of justice and humanity, nor even the common right of property in individuals

has been respected. Wealth has been an object for the attainment of which plunder and massacre were not considered unworthy means.

Said Mr. John Bright, the radical reformer of Manchester, in a speech delivered in the House of Commons:—"It cannot be too universally known that the cultivators of the soil (in India) are in a very unsatisfactory condition; that they are, in truth, in a condition of almost extreme and universal poverty. All testimony concurred upon that point. He would call the attention of the House to the statement of a celebrated native of India, the Rajah Rammohun Roy, who, about twenty years ago, published a pamphlet in London, in which he pointed out the ruinous effects of the Zemindaree system, and the oppressions experienced by the ryots in the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras. After describing the state of affairs generally, he added, 'Such was the melancholy condition of the agricultural labourers, that it always gave him the greatest pain to allude to it.' Three years afterward, Mr. Shore, who was a judge in India, published a work which was considered as a standard work till now, and he stated 'that the British government was not regarded in a favourable light by the native population of India—that a system of taxation and extortion was carried on unparalleled in the annals of any country.'"

From all quarters we receive unimpeachable evidence that the locust system has performed its devouring work

on the broadest scale in India; and that the Hindoos are the victims of conquerors, slower, indeed, in their movements, than Tamerlane or Genghis Khan, but more destructive and more criminal than either of those great barbarian invaders.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CRIME AND THE DUTY OF THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

It remains to sum up the charges against the English oligarchy, and to point out the path which justice, humanity, and the age require the government to pursue. In so doing, we shall go no farther than the facts previously adduced will afford us sure ground, nor speak more harshly than our duty to our oppressed fellow-men will demand. We pity the criminal even while we pass sentence upon her.

A government originating in, and suited for, a barbarous age must necessarily be unfit for one enjoying the meridian of civilization. The arrangement of lord and serf was appropriate to the period when war was regarded as the chief employment of mankind, and when more respect was paid to the kind of blood flowing in a man's veins than to his greatness or generosity of soul. But, in the nineteenth century, war is regarded as an evil to be avoided as long as possible. Peace is the rule, and conflict the exception. Christianity has taught us, also, that the good and the great in heart and mind—wherever born, wherever bred—are the true nobility of our race. It is the sin of the English government that it

works against the bright influence of the times and throws the gloomy shadow of feudalism over some of the fairest regions of the earth. It legislates for the age of William the Conqueror instead of the reign of Victoria.

The few for hereditary luxury and dominion, the many for hereditary misery and slavery, is the grand fundamental principle of the English system. For every gorgeous palace there are a thousand hovels, where even beasts should not be forced to dwell. For every lord who spends his days in drinking, gambling, hunting, horse-racing, and indulging himself in all the luxuries that money can purchase, a thousand persons, at least, must toil day and night to obtain the most wretched subsistence. In no country are the few richer than in England, and in no country are the masses more fearfully wretched. The great bulk of the property of England, both civil and ecclesiastical, is in the grasp of the aristocracy. All offices of church and state, yielding any considerable emolument, are monopolized by the lords and their nominees. The masses earn—the lords spend. The lords have all the property, but the masses pay all the taxes, and slave and starve that the taxes may be paid.

Without such a system, is it possible that there could be millions of acres of good land lying waste, and millions of paupers who dare not cultivate it?—that the workhouses could be crowded—that men, women, and

children could be driven to all kinds of work, and yet by the most exhausting toil not earn enough to enable them to live decently and comfortably—that honest and industrious people could starve by the wayside, or die of disease engendered in dirty hovels—that vice and crime could be practised to an appalling extent—that whole villages could be swept away and the poor labourers either driven into the crowded cities, or to a distant land, far from kindred and friends?

The aristocrats of England are the most extensive slaveholders in the world. In England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, they have the entire labouring mass for their slaves—men, women, and children being doomed to the most grinding toil to enable their masters to live in luxurious ease. In India and the other colonies they have treated the natives as the conquered were treated in the Middle Ages. They have drained their resources, oppressed them in every way, and disposed of tribes and nations as if they had been dealing with cattle. Add the slaves of India to the slaves of the United Kingdom, and we may count them by tens of millions. These slaves are not naturally inferior to their masters. They belong to races fertile in great and good men and women. Poets, artists, philosophers, historians, statesmen, and warriors of the first magnitude in genius have sprung from these down-trodden people. They have fully proved themselves capable of enjoying the sweets of freedom. They remain slaves because their masters

find it profitable, and know how to cozen and bully them into submission.

The following description of France before the great revolution of 1789, by M. Thiers, is strikingly applicable to the condition of Great Britain at the present day:—

"The condition of the country, both political and economical, was intolerable. There was nothing but privilege—privilege vested in individuals, in classes, in towns, in provinces, and even in trades and professions. Every thing contributed to check industry and the natural genius of man. All the dignities of the state, civil, ecclesiastical, and military, were exclusively reserved to certain individuals. No man could take up a profession without certain titles and the compliance with certain pecuniary conditions. Even the favours of the crown were converted into family property, so that the king could scarcely exercise his own judgment, or give any preference. Almost the only liberty left to the sovereign was that of making pecuniary gifts, and he had been reduced to the necessity of disputing with the Duke of Coigny for the abolition of a useless place. Every thing, then, was made immovable property in the hands of a few, and everywhere these few resisted the many who had been despoiled. The burdens of the state weighed on one class only. The noblesse and the clergy possessed about two-thirds of the landed property; the other third, possessed by the people, paid taxes to the king, a long list of feudal *droits* to the noblesse, tithes to the clergy, and had, moreover, to support the devastations committed by noble sportsmen and their game. The taxes upon consumption pressed upon the great multitude, and consequently on the people. The collection of these imposts was managed in an unfair and irritating manner; the lords of the soil left long arrears with impunity, but the people, upon any delay in payment, were harshly treated, arrested, and condemned to pay in their persons, in default of money to produce. The people, therefore, nourished with their labour and

defended with their blood the higher classes of society, without being able to procure a comfortable subsistence for themselves. The townspeople, a body of citizens, industrious, educated, less miserable than the people, could nevertheless obtain none of the advantages to which they had a right to aspire, seeing that it was their industry that nourished and their talents that adorned the kingdom."

The elements of revolution are all to be found in Great Britain. A Mirabeau, with dauntless will and stormy eloquence, could use them with tremendous effect. Yet the giant of the people does not raise his voice to plead the cause of the oppressed, and to awaken that irresitible enthusiasm which would sweep away the pampered aristocracy.

The armorial escutcheons of the aristocracy are fearfully significant of its character. Says John Hampden, Jun.:*—

"The whole emblazonment of aristocracy is one manifesto of savage barbarism, brute force, and propensity to robbery and plunder. What are these objects on their shields? Daggers, swords, lions' heads, dogs' heads, arrow-heads, boars' heads, cannon balls, clubs, with a medley of stars, moons, and unmeaning figures. What are the crests of these arms? Lascivious goats, rampant lions, fiery dragons, and griffins gone crazed: bulls' heads, blockheads, arms with uplifted daggers, beasts with daggers, and vultures tearing up helpless birds. What, again, are the supporters of these shields? What are the emblems of the powers by which they are mantained and upheld? The demonstration is deeply significant. They are the most singular assemblage of all that is fierce, savage, rampageous, villanous, lurking, treacherous, blood-

* The Aristocracy of England.

thirsty, cruel, and bestial in bestial natures. They are infuriated lions, boars, and tigers; they are raging bulls, filthy goats, horrid hyenas, snarling dogs, drunken bears, and mad rams; they are foxes, wolves, panthers, every thing that is creeping, sneaking, thievish, and perfidious. Nay, nature cannot furnish emblems extensive enough, and so start up to our astonished sight the most hideous shapes of fiendlike dragons and griffins, black, blasted as by infernal fires; the most fuliginous of monsters; and if the human shape is assumed for the guardians and supporters of aristocracy, they are wild and savage men, armed with clubs and grim with hair, scowling brute defiance, and seeming ready to knock down any man at the command of their lords. Ay, the very birds of prey are called in; and eagles, vultures, cormorants, in most expressive attitudes, with most ludicrous embellishments of crowned heads, collared necks, escutcheoned sides, and with hoisted wings and beaks of open and devouring wrath, proclaim the same great truth, that aristocracy is of the class of what the Germans call *Raub-thieren*, or robber-beasts—in our vernacular, *beasts of prey.*"

And the character thus published to the world has been acted out to the full from the days of the bastard Duke of Normandy and his horde of ruffians to the time of the "Iron Duke" and his associates in title and plunder. The hyenas and vultures have never been satisfied.

The crime of England lies in maintaining the slavery of a barbarous age in the middle of the nineteenth century; in keeping her slaves in physical misery, mental darkness, moral depravity, and heathenism; in carrying fire and sword into some of the loveliest regions of the earth, in order to gratify that thirst for wealth and dominion ever characteristic of an aristocracy; in

forcing her slaves in India to cultivate poison, and her weak neighbours of China to buy it; in plundering and oppressing the people of all her colonies; in concentrating the wealth of the United Kingdom and the dependencies in the purses of a few persons, and thus dooming all others beneath her iron rule to constant, exhausting, and unrewarded toil! We arraign her before the tribunal of justice and humanity, as the most powerful and destructive of tyrannies; as the author of Ireland's miseries, and a course of action toward that island compared with which the dismemberment of Poland was merciful; as the remorseless conqueror of the Hindoos; as a government so oppressive that her people are flying by thousands to the shores of America to escape its inflictions! Though most criminals plead "not guilty," she cannot have the front to do so! The general judgment of civilized mankind has long ago pronounced a verdict of conviction.

Yet, guilty as is the English oligarchy, certain of its members have taken to lecturing the world about the duties of Christians and philanthropists. This, we suppose, in charity, is done upon the principle given by Hamlet to his mother—

"Assume a virtue if you have it not."

But a loftier authority than Shakspeare tells us to remove the beam from our own eye before we point to the mote that is in the eye of a brother. Example,

also, is more powerful than precept. Pious exhortations from a villain are usually disregarded. A preacher should never have the blood of slaughtered victims on his hands.

We think it not difficult to show that England is the best friend of slavery, while professing an aversion to it, and dictating to other governments to strive for its abolition. At an enormous expense, she maintains men-of-war upon the coast of Africa, with the object of suppressing the trade in negro slaves. This expense her white slaves are taxed to pay; while the men-of-war have not only not suppressed the slave-trade, but have doubled its horrors, by compelling the slave-traders to inflict new tortures upon the negroes they capture and conceal. In the mean time, the government is doing all in its power to impoverish and enslave (for the slavery of a people follows its poverty) the more intelligent races of the world. England prides herself upon her efforts to destroy the trade in African savages and chattel slavery. Her philanthropy is all black; miserable wretches with pale faces have no claims upon her assisting hand; and she refuses to recognise the only kind of slavery by which masters are necessitated to provide well for their slaves, while she enforces that system which starves them! England is the best friend of the most destructive species of slavery, and has extended it over tens of millions of human beings.

Justice, humanity, and the age demand the abolition of this exhausting, famine-breeding, and murderous system. It is hostile to every principle of right—to civilization, and to the loving spirit of Christianity. Starving millions groan beneath the yoke. From the crowded factories and workshops—from the pestilential hovels—from the dark and slave-filled coal-pits—from the populous workhouses—from the vast army of wandering beggars in England and Scotland—from the perishing peasantry of Ireland—from the wretched Hindoos upon the Ganges and the Indus—from the betrayed Coolies in the West-India Islands—arises the cry for relief from the plunderers and the oppressors. "How long, O Lord, how long!"

A few thousand persons own the United Kingdom. They have robbed and reduced to slavery not only their own countrymen, but millions in other lands. They continue to rob wherever they find an opportunity. They spend what their crime has accumulated in all kinds of vice and dissipation, and rear their children to the same courses. Money raised for religious purposes they waste in luxurious living. They trade in all the offices of church and state. They persecute, by exclusion, all who do not subscribe to "thirty-nine articles" which they wish to force upon mankind. In brief, the oligarchy lies like an incubus upon the empire, and the people cannot call themselves either free or happy until the aristocrats be driven from their high

places. Burst, then, the chains, ye countrymen of Hampden and Vane! Show to the world that the old fire is not yet quenched! that the spirits of your martyrs to liberty are yet among you, and their lessons in your hearts! Obtain your freedom—peaceably, if you can—*but obtain it*, for it expands and ennobles the life of a nation! In the air of liberty alone can a people enjoy a healthy existence. A day of real freedom is worth more than years in a dungeon. What have you to dread? Do you not know your strength? Be assured, this aristocracy could not stand an hour, were you resolved against its existence! It would be swept away as a feather before a hurricane. Do you fear that much blood would flow in the struggle? Consider the hundreds of thousands who are crushed out of existence every year by this aristocracy, and ask yourselves if it is not better that the system should be overthrown, even at the expense of blood, than that it should continue its destructive career? Had not men better make an effort to secure freedom and plenty for their posterity, than starve quietly by the wayside? These are the questions you should take home to your hearts. One grand, determined, glorious effort, and you are free.

"Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?"

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